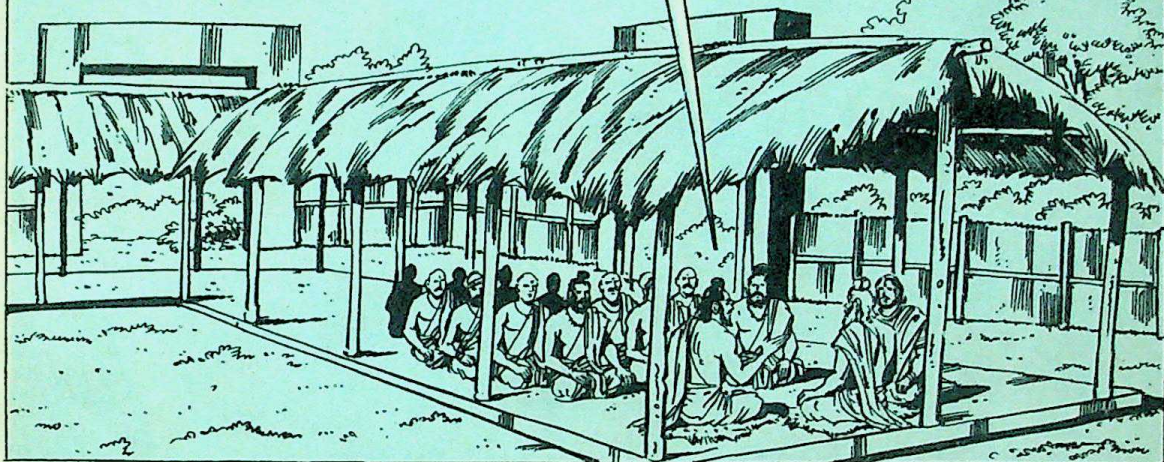


Mahabharata - 36

THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

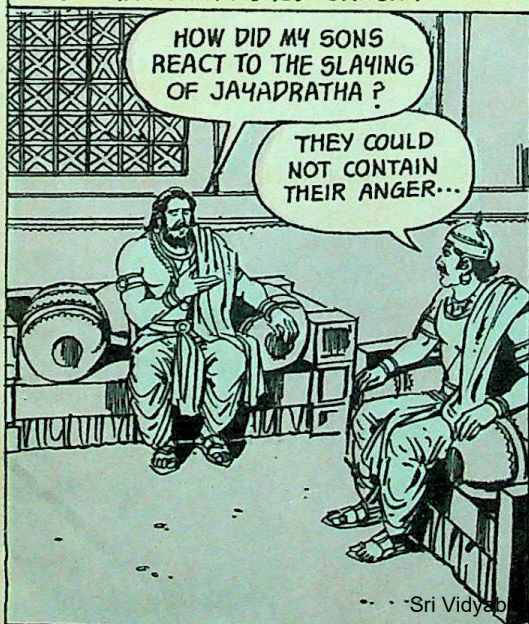
AFTER FULFILLING HIS VOW TO KILL JAYADRATHA BEFORE SUNDOWN, ARJUNA BEGAN TO ATTACK THE KAURAVA FORCES WITH RENEWED VIGOUR.



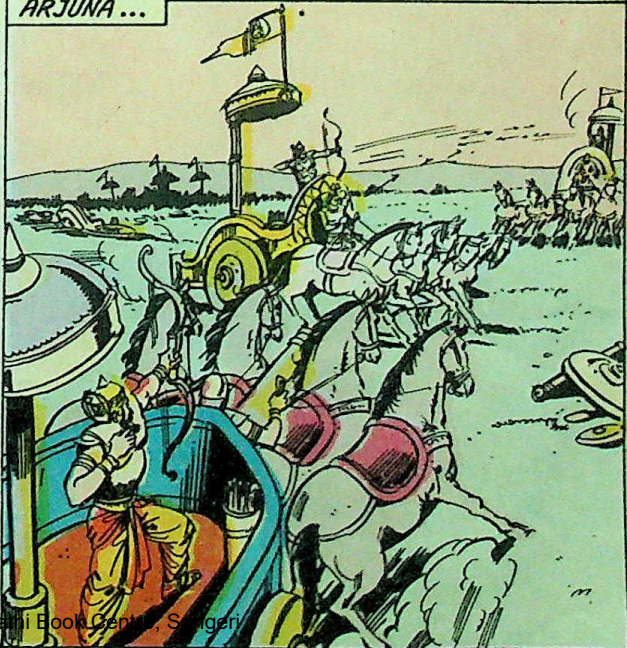
"ANXIOUS TO LEARN THE DETAILS OF THE BATTLE, THE BLIND PATRIARCH DHRITARASHTRA ASKED SANJAYA -

HOW DID MY SONS REACT TO THE SLAYING OF JAYADRATHA ?

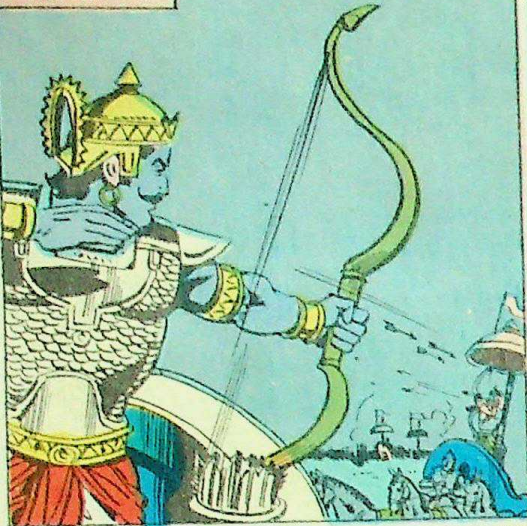
THEY COULD NOT CONTAIN THEIR ANGER...



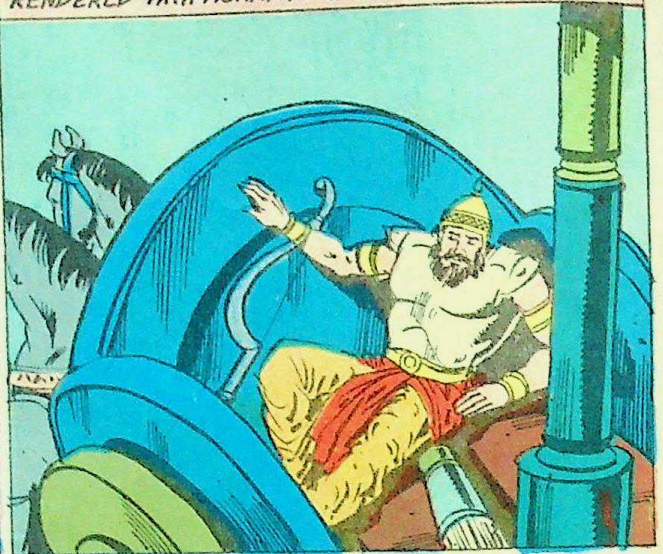
"...INFURIATED BY THE KILLING OF JAYADRATHA, KRIPACHARYA AND ASHWATTHAMA ATTACKED ARJUNA ...



"RELUCTANT TO ATTACK HIS GURU, ARJUNA USED THE MILDEST OF ARROWS..."



"...BUT SO NUMEROUS WERE THEY THAT THEY RENDERED KRIPACHARYA UNCONSCIOUS."

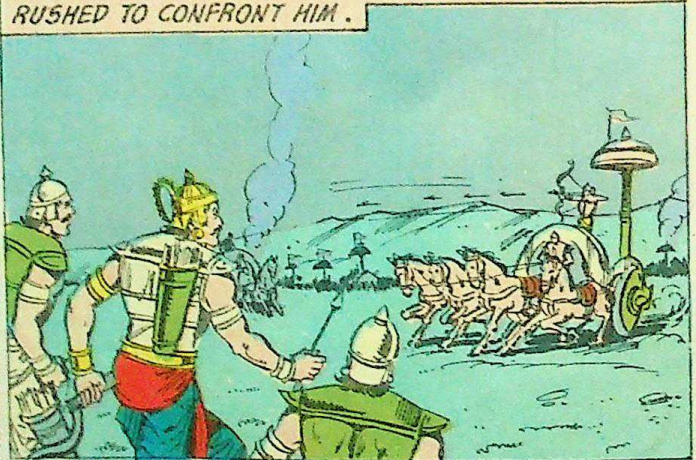


"ARJUNA THOUGHT THAT KRIPACHARYA WAS DEAD. HE WAS SMITTEN WITH GUILT."

WOE BETIDE ME!
I HAVE KILLED
MY OWN
GURU!

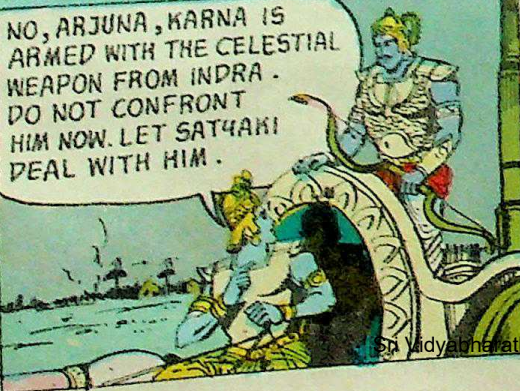


"KARNA SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK THE REPENTANT ARJUNA. SATYAKI AND OTHER WARRIORS RUSHED TO CONFRONT HIM."

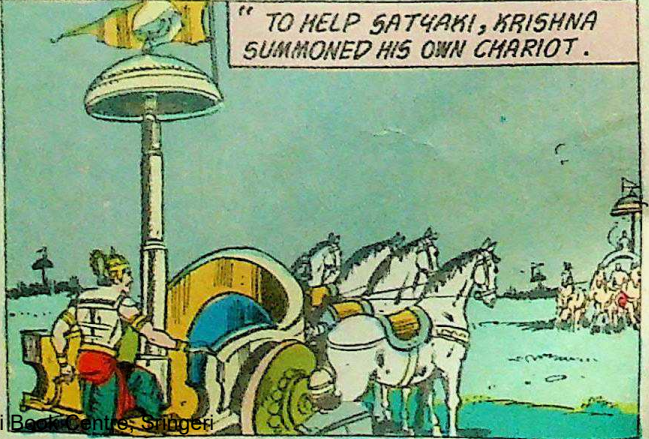


"KRISHNA HOWEVER PREVENTED ARJUNA FROM FIGHTING WITH KARNA."

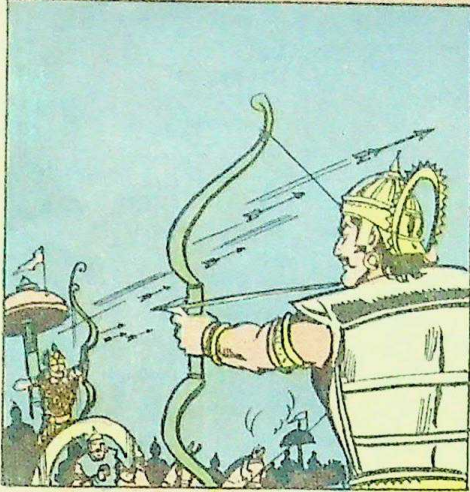
NO, ARJUNA, KARNA IS
ARMED WITH THE CELESTIAL
WEAPON FROM INDRA.
DO NOT CONFRONT
HIM NOW. LET SATYAKI
DEAL WITH HIM.



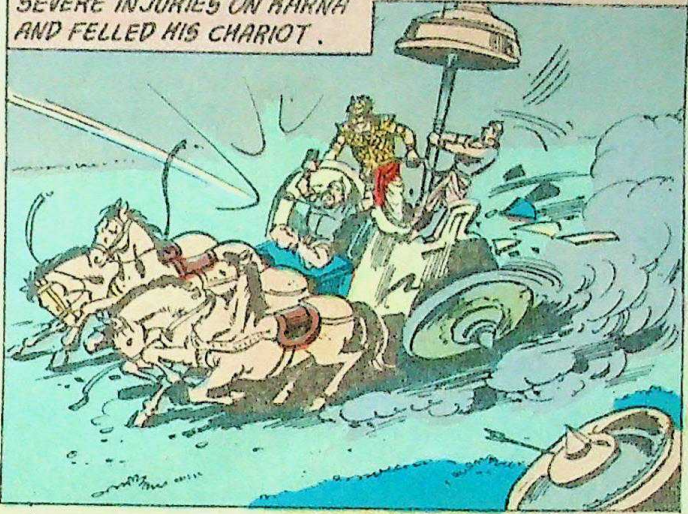
"TO HELP SATYAKI, KRISHNA SUMMONED HIS OWN CHARIOT."



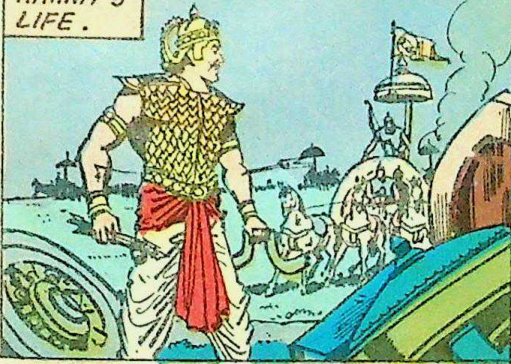
"A FEARFUL BATTLE ENSUED BETWEEN SATYAKI AND KARNA .



"WITH SHARP IRON ARROWS SATYAKI INFLICTED SEVERE INJURIES ON KARNA AND FELLED HIS CHARIOT .



THEN HE REMEMBERED ARJUNA'S VOW TO KILL KARNA . HE THEREFORE SPARED KARNA'S LIFE .



"AS THE SUN BEGAN TO SET, KRISHNA AND ARJUNA PROCEEDED TO MEET YUDHISHTHIRA .

ARJUNA HAS FULFILLED HIS VOW. JAYADRATHA IS DEAD !

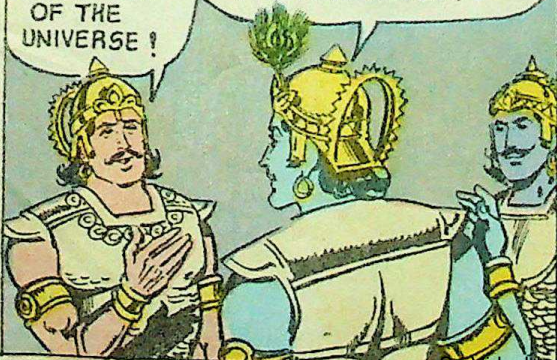
YOUR WORDS FILL MY HEART WITH JOY .



YUDHISHTHIRA SAID TO KRISHNA -

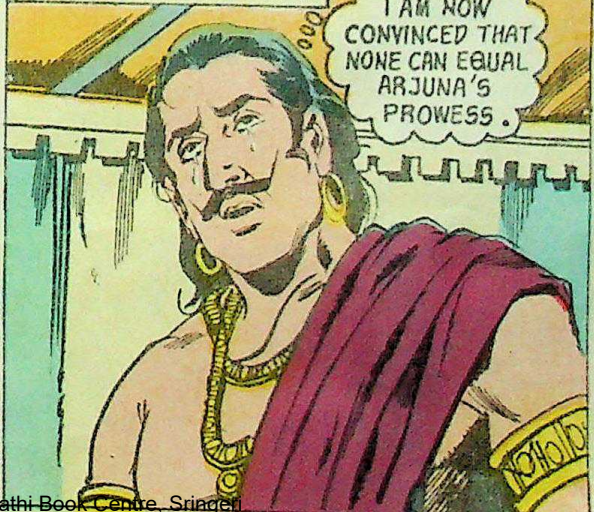
IT IS YOU WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ARJUNA TO FULFIL HIS VOW, O LORD OF THE UNIVERSE !

NO YUDHISHTHIRA , YOUR AUSTERITIES AND RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT AND ARJUNA'S SKILL AS A MATCHLESS WARRIOR ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS VICTORY .



" JAYADRATHA'S DEATH HAD BROKEN DURYODHANA'S SPIRIT .

I AM NOW CONVINCED THAT NONE CAN EQUAL ARJUNA'S PROWESS .



"HE THEN WENT TO DRONA -

HOW MANY KINGS HAVE GIVEN UP THEIR LIVES FOR ME ! EVEN THE INVINCIBLE BHEESHMA IS LYING SUPINE IN THE BATTLEFIELD . SEVEN DIVISIONS OF OUR ARMY ARE DESTROYED .

I HAVE ALWAYS TOLD YOU THAT ARJUNA IS INVINCIBLE . HE COULD KILL JAYADRATHA IN SPITE OF 50 MANY OF YOU STRIVING HARD TO PROTECT HIM . YET , I ASSURE YOU , YOU WILL NOT FIND ME WANTING IN MY EFFORTS . TILL I KILL ALL THE PANDAVAS , I WILL NOT TAKE OFF MY ARMOUR .



I WILL PENETRATE THE ENEMY FORCES . MEANWHILE PROTECT YOUR MEN , FOR TODAY THE BATTLE MAY CONTINUE INTO THE NIGHT .

"AS THEY WALKED TOWARDS THE BATTLEFIELD , DURYODHANA CONFIDED IN KARNA -

DRONA HAD PROMISED TO PROTECT JAYADRATHA , BUT HE ALLOWED ARJUNA TO GO PAST HIM . AFTER ALL , ARJUNA HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS FAVOURITE PUPIL .



THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

THAT IS NOT FAIR ! THE ACHARYA
DID TRY HIS BEST . BUT ARJUNA
MANAGED TO GET PAST HIM .
I FEEL DRONACHARYA IS NOT
TO BE BLAMED .



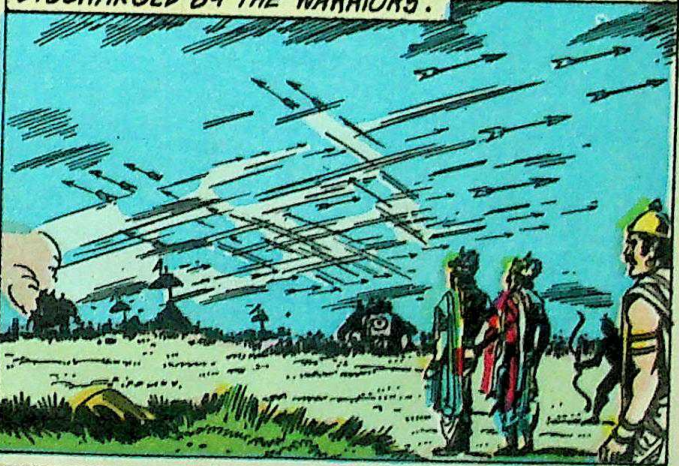
COME , LET US NOT TRY TO
OPPOSE DESTINY , BUT
LET US DO OUR BEST IN
BATTLE .



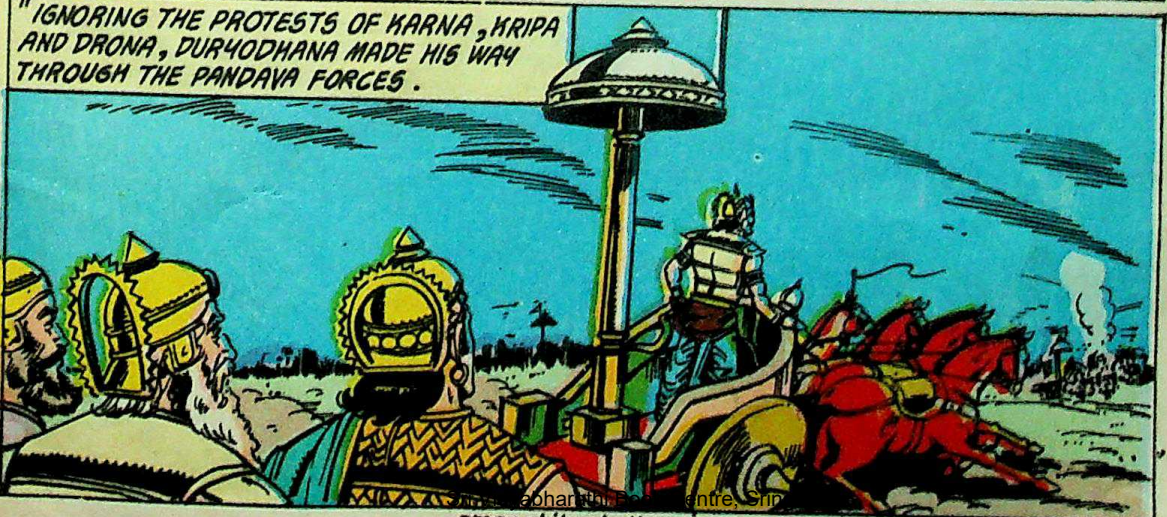
" WHILE TALKING , THEY SAW THE
ARMIES ON THE BATTLEFIELD .



" BECAUSE OF THE FADING LIGHT , THEY COULD NOT
SEE CLEARLY THE THOUSANDS OF ARROWS
DISCHARGED BY THE WARRIORS .



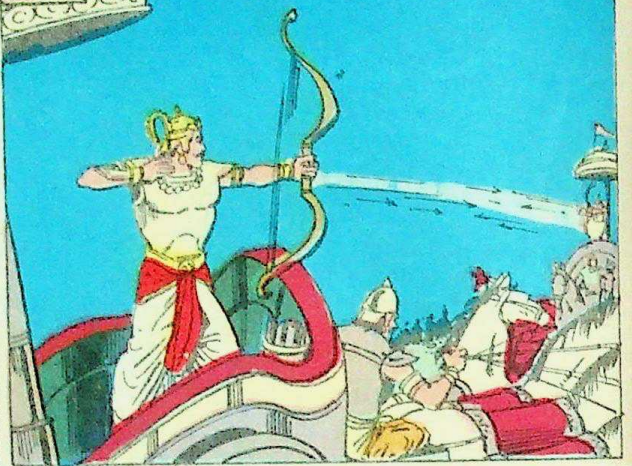
" IGNORING THE PROTESTS OF KARNA , KRIPA
AND DRONA , DURYODHANA MADE HIS WAY
THROUGH THE PANDAVA FORCES .



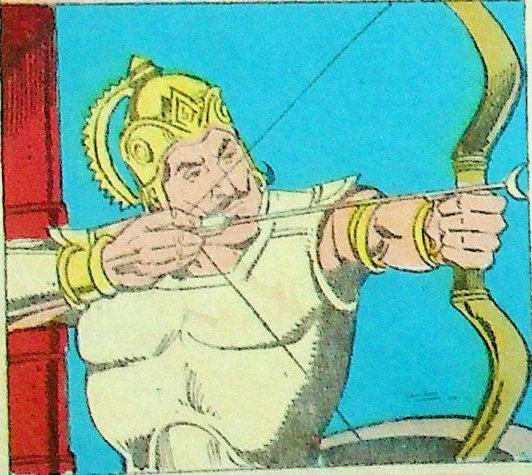
"AS THE MORNING SUN DISPELS THE DARKNESS, DURYODHANA DESTROYED MANY PANDAVA SOLDIERS.



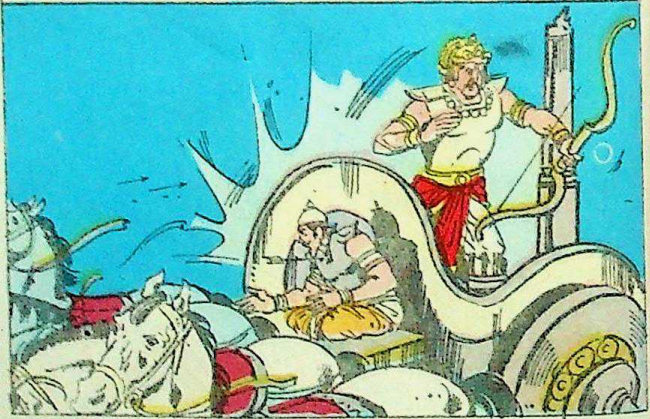
"JUST THEN YUDHISHTHIRA CHARGED TOWARDS HIM.



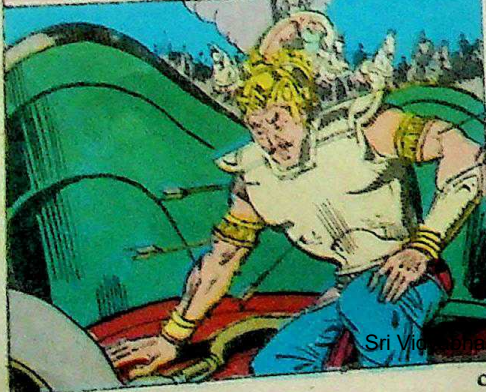
"AND THE TWO WERE LOCKED IN COMBAT.



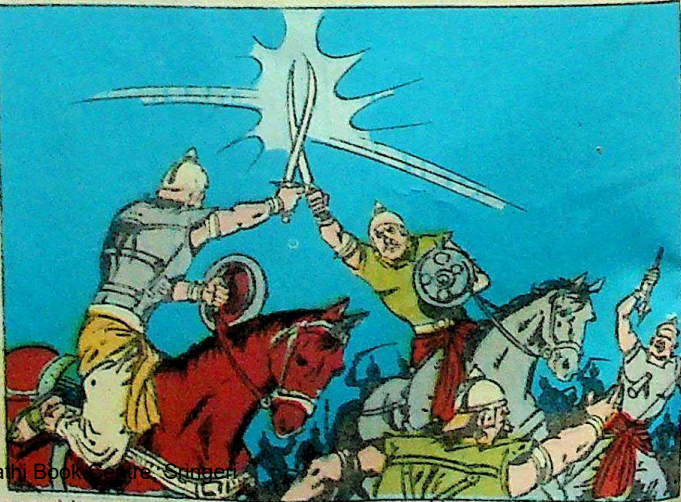
"WITH HIS POWERFUL ARROWS, DURYODHANA INFLICTED INJURIES ON YUDHISHTHIRA, HIS CHARIOTEER AND ALL THE FOUR HORSES.



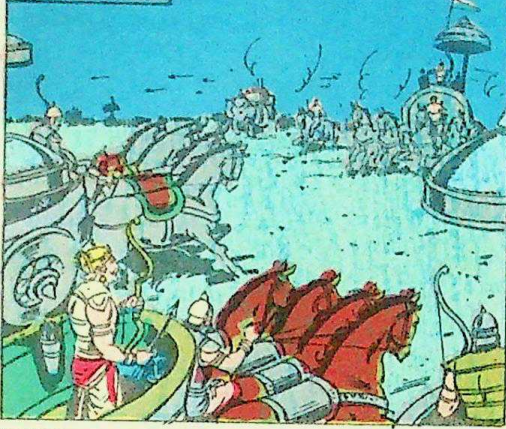
"DURYODHANA WAS ALSO SERIOUSLY INJURED BY YUDHISHTHIRA'S BARRAGE OF ARROWS AND HE SAT DOWN IN THE CHARIOT.



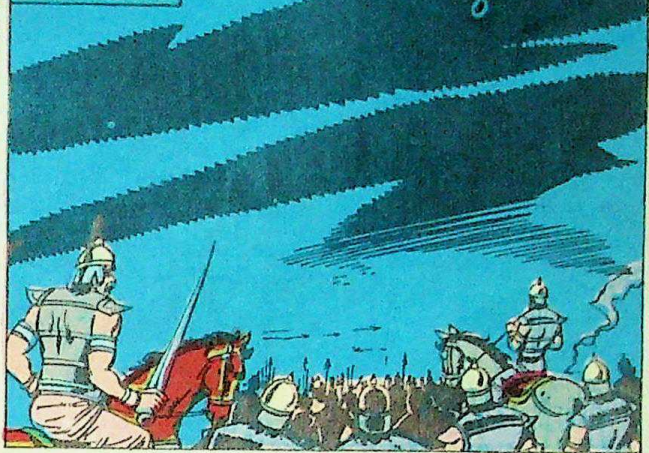
SOON THE DUEL TURNED INTO A GENERAL FIGHT.



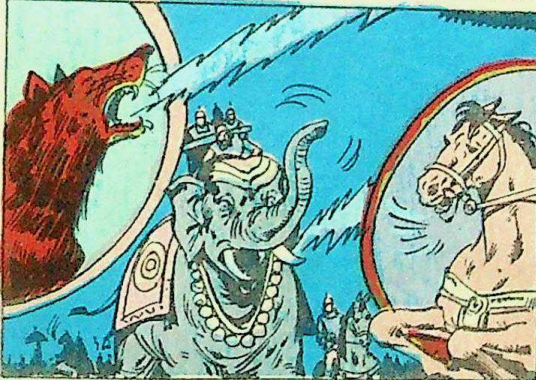
"AS THE MIGHTY WARRIORS LIKE
NAKULA, SAHADEVA AND VIRATA
ATTACKED DRONA WITH THEIR
ARMIES ...



"THE NIGHT TURNED DARK AND OMINOUS ENOUGH
TO PUT FEAR IN THE HEARTS OF THE BRAVEST OF
WARRIORS .



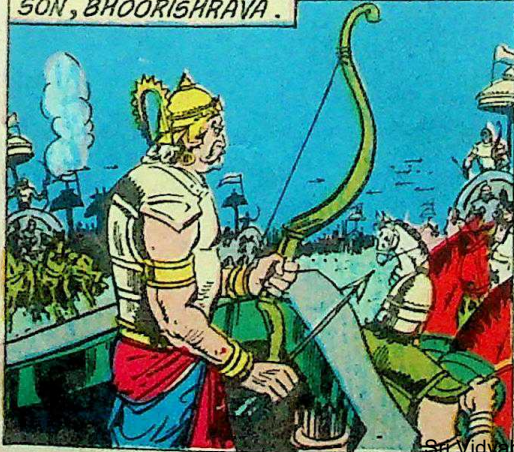
THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT WAS BROKEN BY
THE PIERCING SOUND FROM BUGLES, THE
TRUMPETING OF ELEPHANTS, THE NEIGHING
OF HORSES AND THE HOWLING OF JACKALS.



"BHEEMA WENT ABOUT ATTACKING DHRITARASHTRA'S
SONS WITH SLAPS AND BLOWS USING HIS BARE
HANDS .



MEANWHILE SOMADATTA ATTACKED
SATYAKI TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF HIS
SON, BHOORISHRAVA .



"HE SAID TO SATYAKI -
HOW COULD YOU ATTACK
MY SON WHEN HE WAS
UNARMED ?

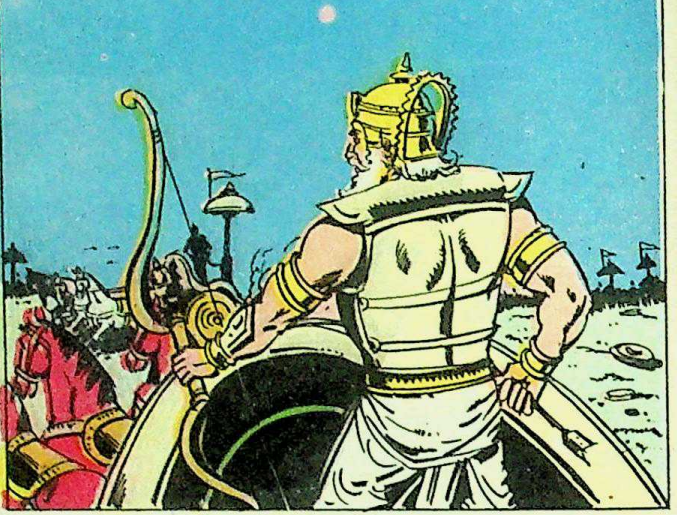
SO WHAT ! AND
NOW I WILL KILL
YOU TOO .



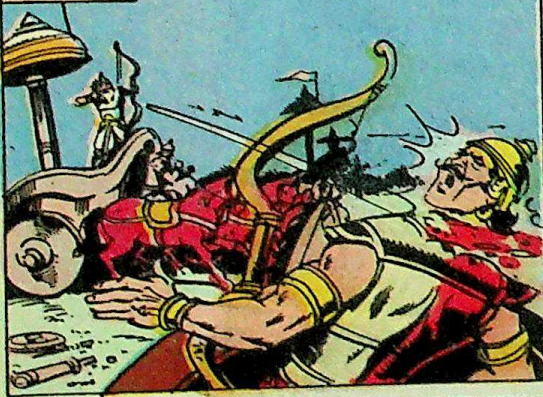
" SOMADATTA FAINTED AS A RESULT OF SATYAKI'S ATTACK AND HAD TO BE CARRIED AWAY .



" SEEING THIS , AN ENRAGED DRONA RUSHED TOWARDS SATYAKI .



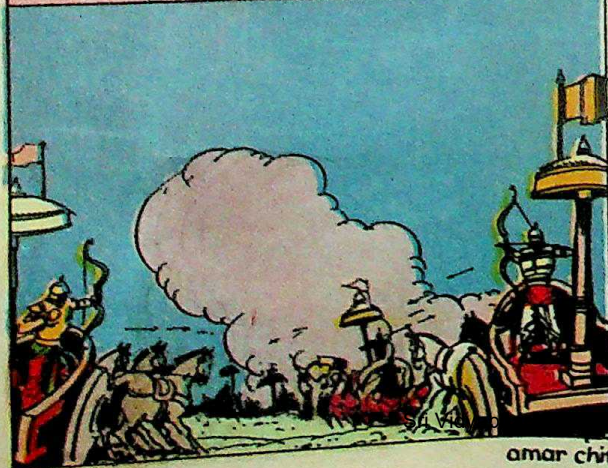
" SO FURIOUS WAS HE THAT ANYONE WHO COME IN HIS WAY WAS INSTANTLY KILLED .



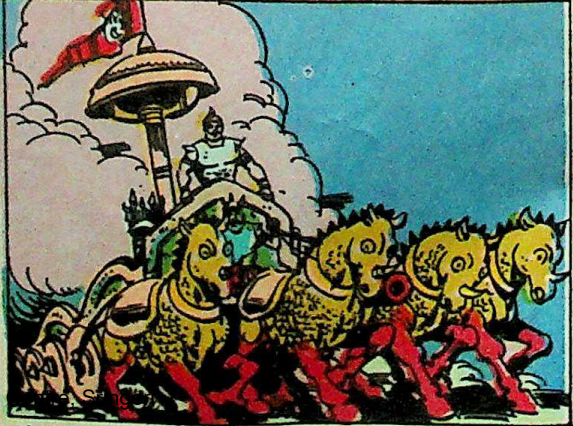
" ARJUNA THEN SAID TO KRISHNA -



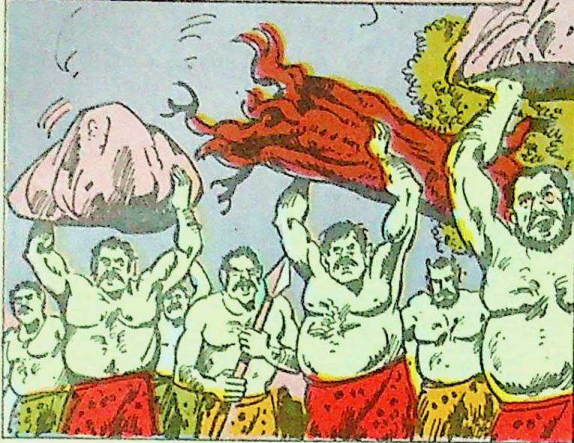
" BHEEMA TOO FOLLOWED .



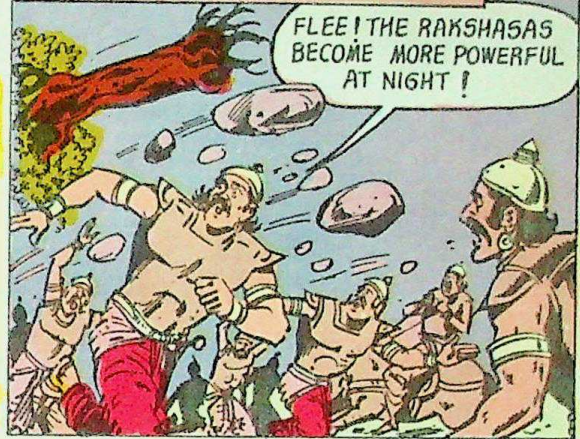
" JUST THEN GHATOTKACHA , BHEEMA'S SON , APPEARED ON THE SCENE .



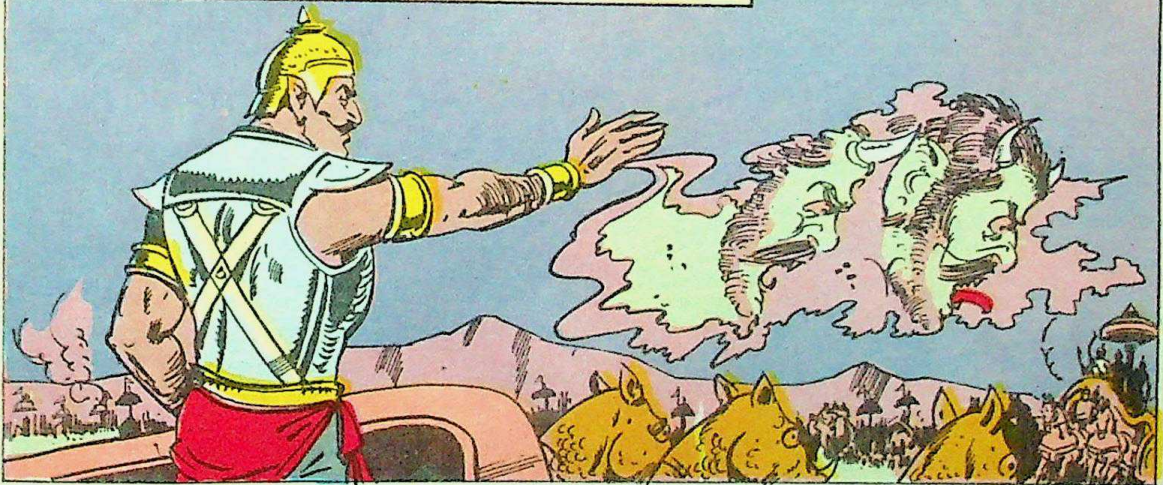
"HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS ARMY OF RAKSHASAS* HIS ROAR MADE EVEN THE ELEPHANTS TREMBLE WITH FEAR."



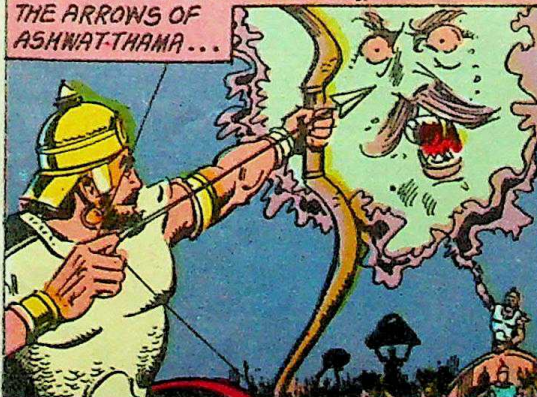
"HIS VERY SIGHT FRIGHTENED THE ENEMY FORCES. HIS ARMY STARTED RAINING BOULDERS ON THE KAURAVAS."



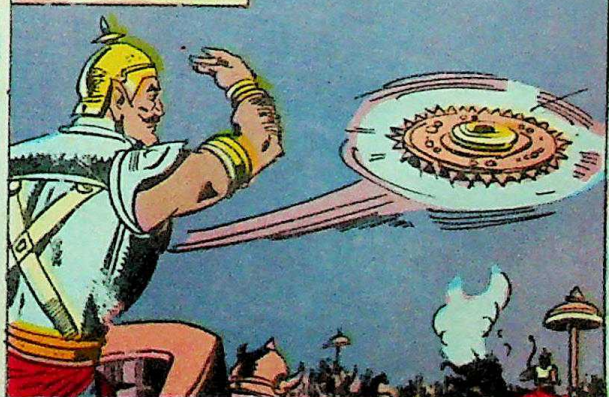
"GHATOTKACHA WITH HIS MAGICAL POWERS CREATED AN AWESOME ILLUSION. WHILE OTHERS FLED IN FEAR, ASHWATTHAMA ALONE WAS UNDAUNTED ..."



... AND HE DESTROYED THE ILLUSION. THE ENRAGED GHATOTKACHA, SMITTEN BY THE ARROWS OF ASHWATTHAMA ...

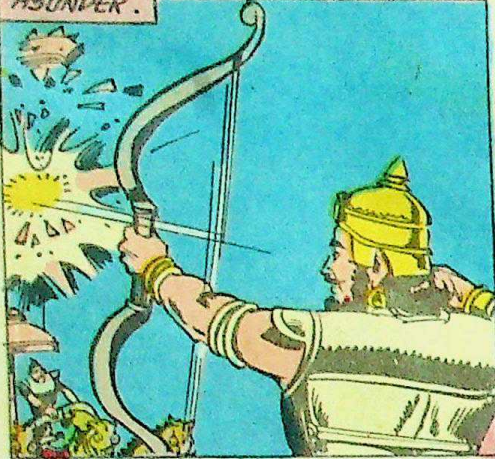


... TOOK UP A CHAKRA** AND HURLED IT AT ASHWATTHAMA .

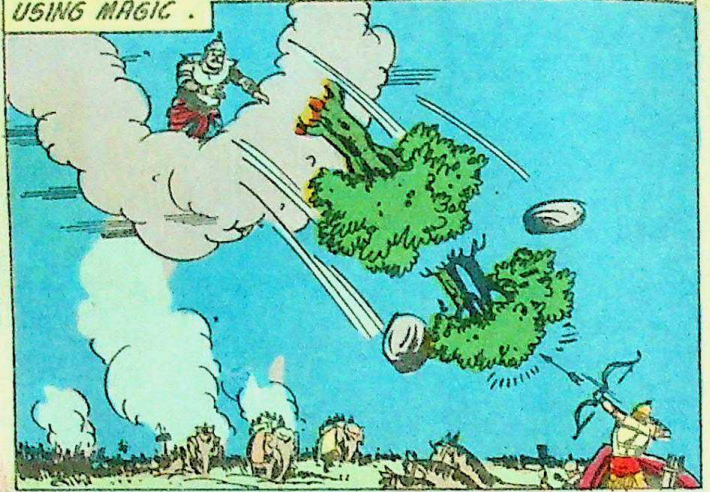


* DEMONS .

"WITH HIS WELL-AIMED ARROWS, ASHWATTHAMA NIMBLY CAST IT ASUNDER."



"GHATOTKACHA'S SON NOW JOINED THE FIGHT, ALSO USING MAGIC."



"BUT HE SOON SUCCEEDED TO ASHWATTHAMA'S ARROWS. GHATOTKACHA WAS FURIOUS."

ASHWATTHAMA, JUST WAIT! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ALIVE TODAY!

OH! GO AND FIGHT WITH SOMEONE ELSE. DO NOT IRRITATE ME OR ELSE ...



"GHATOTKACHA TRIED VARIOUS TRICKS AND CREATED ILLUSION AFTER ILLUSION TO SCARE ASHWATTHAMA."

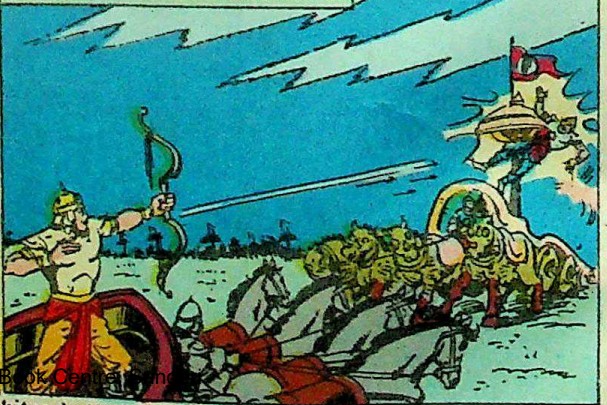


"A CALM AND COLLECTED ASHWATTHAMA ASSURED THE WORRIED DURYODHANA."

LEAVE THIS TO ME, O KING! GO AND REASSURE YOUR SOLDIERS.

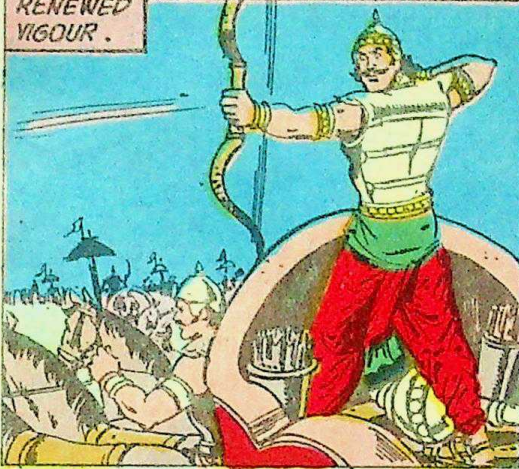


WITH AN ARROW THAT RESEMBLED THE MACE OF YAMA* ASHWATTHAMA WOUNDED GHATOTKACHA, WHO FELL TO THE GROUND."



THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

"MANY KINGS IN THE PANDAVA ARMY FELT THAT GHATOTKACHA HAD BEEN KILLED, AND LOST THE WILL TO FIGHT. BHEEMA THEN ATTACKED THE MAURAVA ARMY WITH RENEWED VIGOUR."



"SANJAYA NARRATED THE GRUESOME DETAILS."

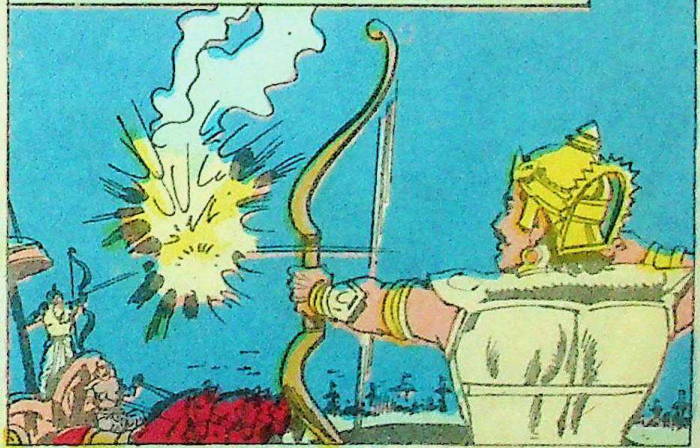
TEN OF YOUR BRAVE SONS ATTACKED BHEEMA BUT HE KILLED ALL OF THEM.



"MEANWHILE DRONA RAINED VARIOUS CELESTIAL WEAPONS ON YUDHISHTHIRA, INCLUDING THE BRAHMASTRA*."



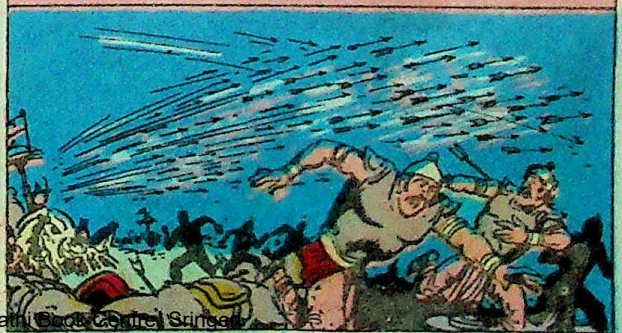
"BUT HIS EFFORTS WERE FUTILE SINCE YUDHISHTHIRA MATCHED HIM WEAPON FOR WEAPON, AND FENDED OFF HIS ATTACK."



"DRONA NOW TURNED AWAY AND ATTACKED DRUPADA'S ARMY ONLY TO FIND ARJUNA AND BHEEMA CONFRONTING HIM."



"KAURAVA SOLDIERS ENFEEBLED BY LACK OF SLEEP AND TERRIFIED BY THE DARK NIGHT, RAN AMOK UNDER ARJUNA'S ONSLAUGHT."



* A WEAPON INVOKING THE POWER OF BRAHMA.

ADDRESSING KARNA, DURYODHANA SAID—

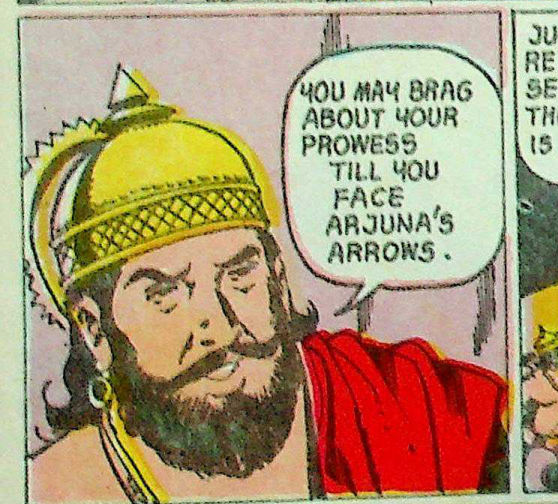
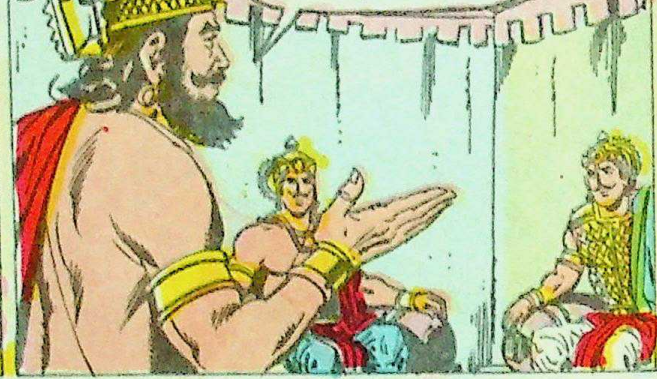
KARNA, MY FRIEND, THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO PROVE YOUR FRIENDSHIP. COME TO THE RESCUE OF MY MEN.

REST ASSURED, I SWEAR I WILL KILL THE PANDAVAS AND PANCHALAS AND LAY THE EARTH AT YOUR FEET TO RULE OVER.



"KRIPACHARYA INTERVENED WITH A MOCKING SMILE—

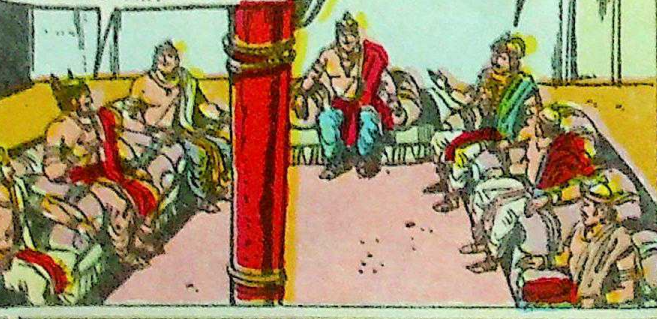
IF WORDS WERE ENOUGH, THEN INDEED YOU ARE THE MAN DURYODHANA NEEDS NOW.



YOU MAY BRAG ABOUT YOUR PROWESS TILL YOU FACE ARJUNA'S ARROWS.

JUST AS BRAHMANAS ARE RENOWNED FOR THEIR SERMONS, KSHATRIYAS FOR THEIR VALOUR, YOUR PROWESS IS IN BUILDING CASTLES IN THE AIR.

YOU WILL SEE ME KILL ARJUNA WITH THE HELP OF THE SHAKTI GIVEN BY INDRA.



"WHEN KRIPACHARYA CONTINUED HIS TAUNTS, KARNA FLARED UP.



ONE MORE WORD FROM YOU AND I WILL CUT OFF YOUR TONGUE.

ENRAGED BY KARNA'S VERBAL DUEL WITH HIS UNCLE KRIPA, ASHWATTHAMA RUSHED TOWARDS KARNA WITH HIS DRAWN SWORD RAISED UP. BUT DURYODHANA SAID—

SHED THIS ANGER. WE HAVE A GREAT TASK BEFORE US.

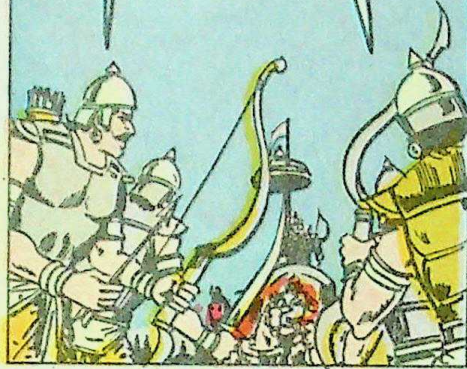
WE WILL FORGIVE KARNA NOW. BUT SOON ARJUNA WILL SHATTER HIS EGO.



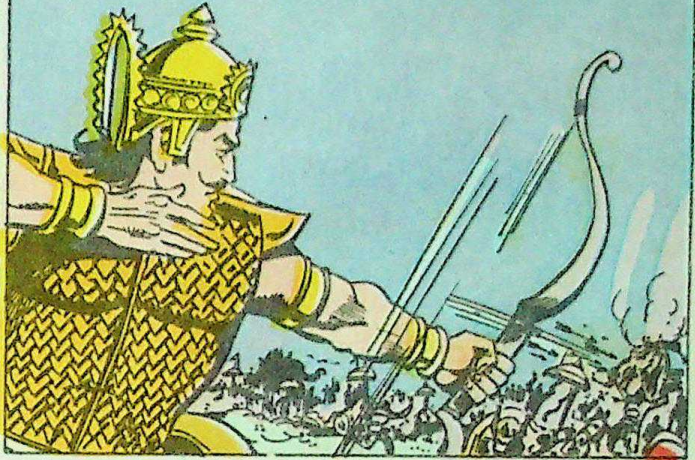
"AS SOON AS KARNA TOOK UP ARMS, THE PANDAVA ARMY ATTACKED HIM WITH FURY.

KILL KARNA.

DESTROY THIS FOOLISH MAN!



"BUT KARNA AT HIS BEST WAS TERROR INCARNATE.

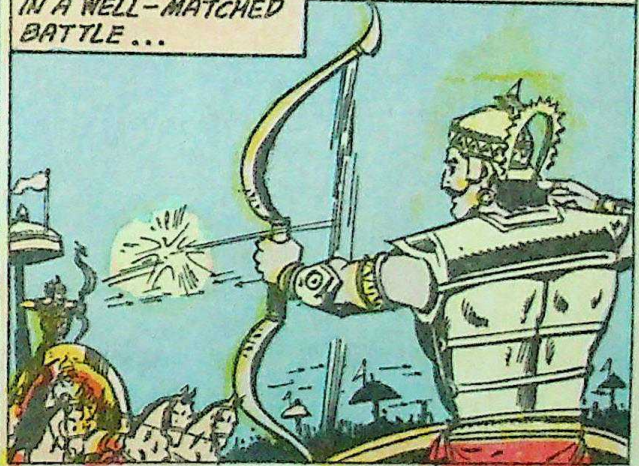


"SEEING KARNA'S PROWESS, DURYODHANA TOLD ASHWATTHAMA—

GREAT IS KARNA'S VALOUR. LOOK! ARJUNA IS MOVING TOWARDS HIM NOW. SEE THAT KARNA IS PROTECTED FROM HIM.



"KARNA AND ARJUNA WERE SOON ENGAGED IN A WELL-MATCHED BATTLE...

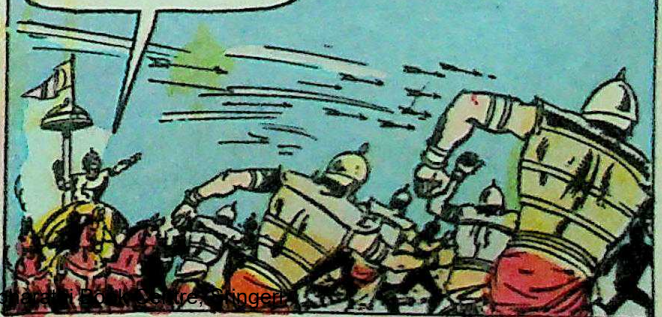


"...TILL ARJUNA CUT OFF KARNA'S BOW STRING, KILLED HIS CHARIOTEER AND ALL THE FOUR HORSES. KARNA THEN RAN TOWARDS THE CHARIOT OF KRIPACHARYA.



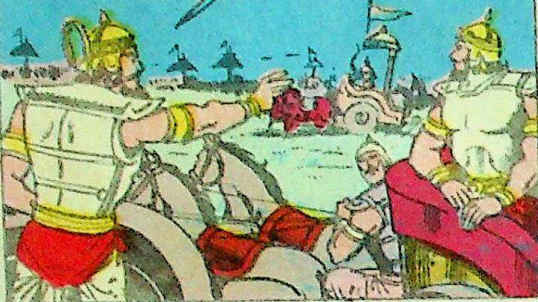
"THE KAURAVA ARMY RAN HELTER-SKELTER IN FEAR OF ARJUNA. DURYODHANA SAID—

DO NOT RUN AWAY, MY BRAVE MEN! I WILL KILL ARJUNA.



"KRIPA CONFIDED IN ASHWATTHAMA."

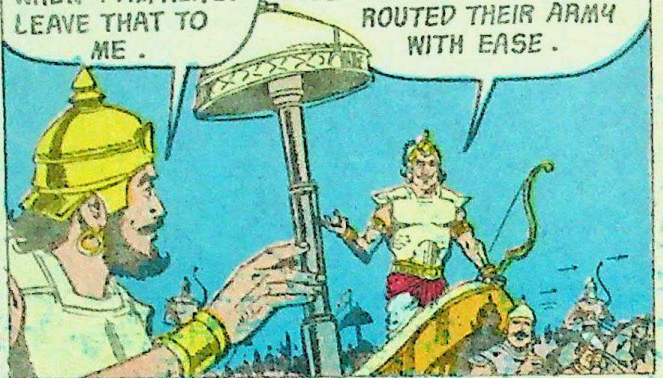
IN HIS RAGE, DURYODHANA WANTS TO CONFRONT ARJUNA. STOP HIM BEFORE HE GETS KILLED.



"ASHWATTHAMA AT ONCE WENT TO DURYODHANA."

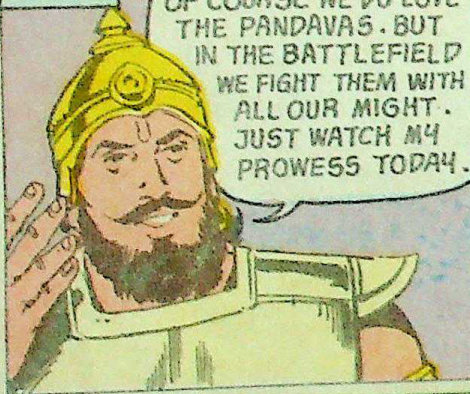
DO NOT INSULT ME BY RUSHING TO FIGHT ARJUNA WHEN I AM ALIVE. LEAVE THAT TO ME.

AH ! BUT BOTH YOU AND YOUR FATHER ARE BESOTTED WITH YOUR LOVE FOR THE PANDAVAS. ELSE YOU WOULD HAVE ROUTED THEIR ARMY WITH EASE.



"ASHWATTHAMA REALISED THAT DURYODHANA WAS SPEAKING IN ANGER."

OF COURSE WE DO LOVE THE PANDAVAS. BUT IN THE BATTLEFIELD WE FIGHT THEM WITH ALL OUR MIGHT. JUST WATCH MY PROWESS TODAY.



"TRUE TO HIS WORD, ASHWATTHAMA CHALLENGED THE ENEMY FORCES."

COME, RAIN YOUR ARROWS ON ME!



"SEEING THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS FLEEING UNDER ASHWATTHAMA'S ATTACK, DHRISTADYUMNA CHALLENGED HIM—"

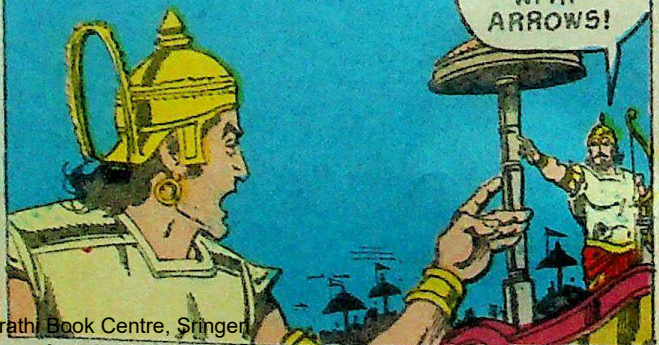
COME FIGHT WITH ME IF YOU ARE A TRUE WARRIOR.

STAND STILL FOR JUST TWO MINUTES AND I WILL SEND YOU TO THE ABODE OF YAMA.



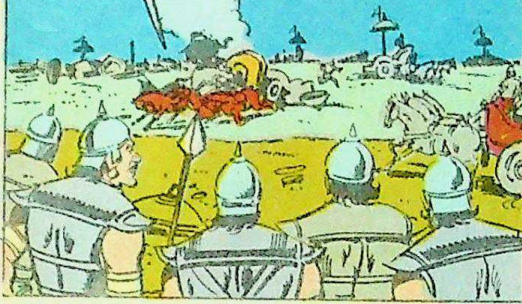
"THE DUEL OF WORDS BETWEEN ASHWATTHAMA AND DHRISTADYUMNA WAS AS FIERCE AS THE ONE WITH ARROWS."

WAIT ! WAIT ! I WILL PIERCE YOUR BODY WITH ARROWS!



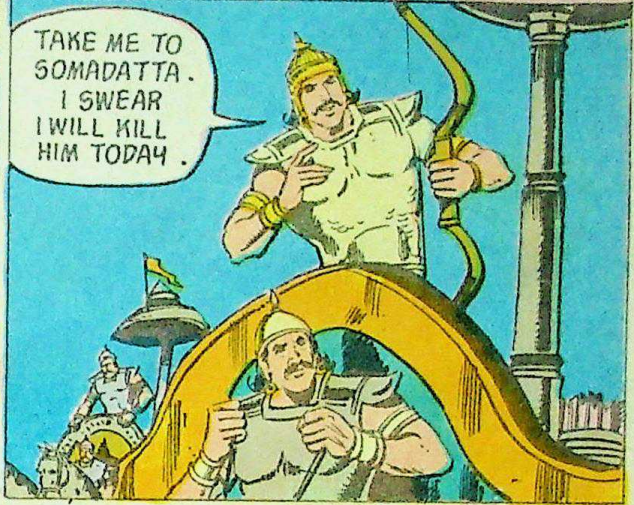
"ASHWATTHAMA MANAGED TO DESTROY
DHRISHTADYUMNA'S UMBRELLA, REAR
ATTENDANTS, CHARIOTEER AND ALL
THE FOUR HORSES.

ASHWATTHAMA HAS
DEFEATED
DHRISHTADYUMNA.



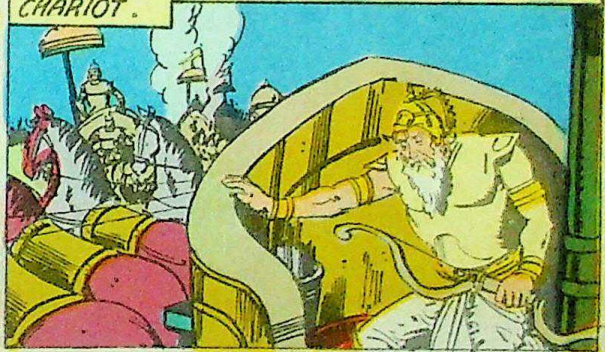
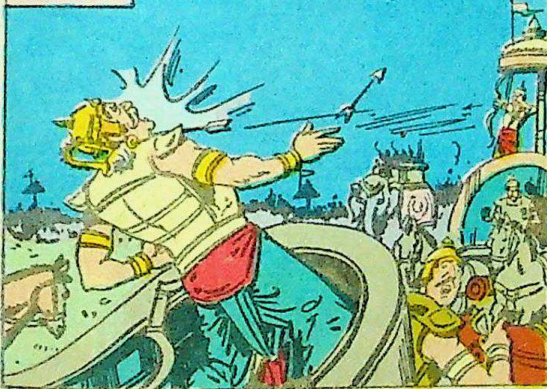
MEANWHILE SATYAKI SAID TO HIS CHARIOTEER

TAKE ME TO
SOMADATTA.
I SWEAR
I WILL KILL
HIM TODAY.



"TRUE TO HIS WORD, SATYAKI DID
SLAY SOMADATTA AFTER A LONG
FIGHT.

WHEN THE KAURAVA WARRIORS CONVERGED ON
SATYAKI, YUDHISHTHIRA RUSHED TO HIS HELP
AND LAUNCHED A FURIOUS ATTACK ON DRONA.
DEEPLY WOUNDED, DRONA SAT DOWN IN THE
CHARIOT.



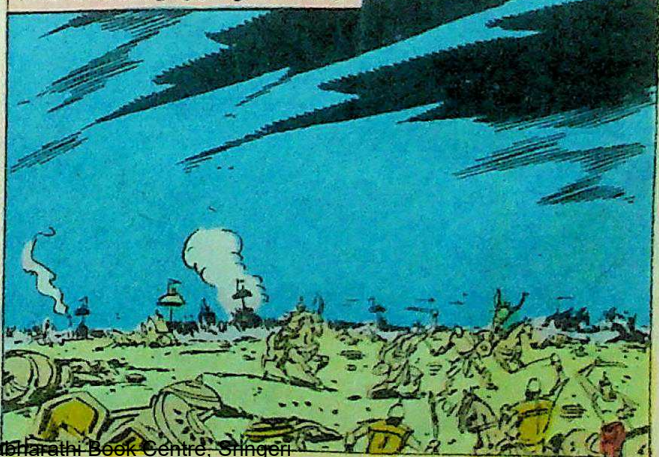
"ON RECOVERING, DRONA SENT A YAYU
ASTRA* WHICH YUDHISHTHIRA
REPELLED BRAVELY. SEEING THIS,
KRISHNA CAUTIONED.

DRONA IS BENT ON
CAPTURING YOU.
AVOID HIM.
A KING SHOULD
FIGHT ONLY
WITH A KING.

KRISHNA IS
RIGHT. LET ME GO
AND HELP
BHEEMA IN
HIS ATTACK.



"ALL THIS WHILE, THE BATTLE WAS BEING WAGED
IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, AIDED BY GUESSWORK AND
THE CALLING OUT OF NAMES.

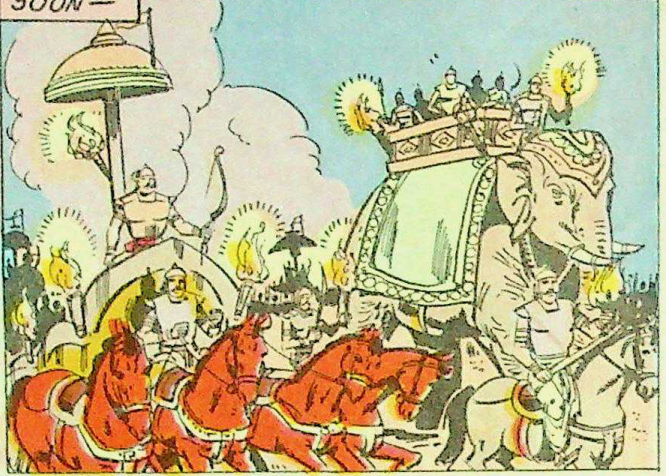


"DURYODHANA COMMANDED THE SOLDIERS ON FOOT."

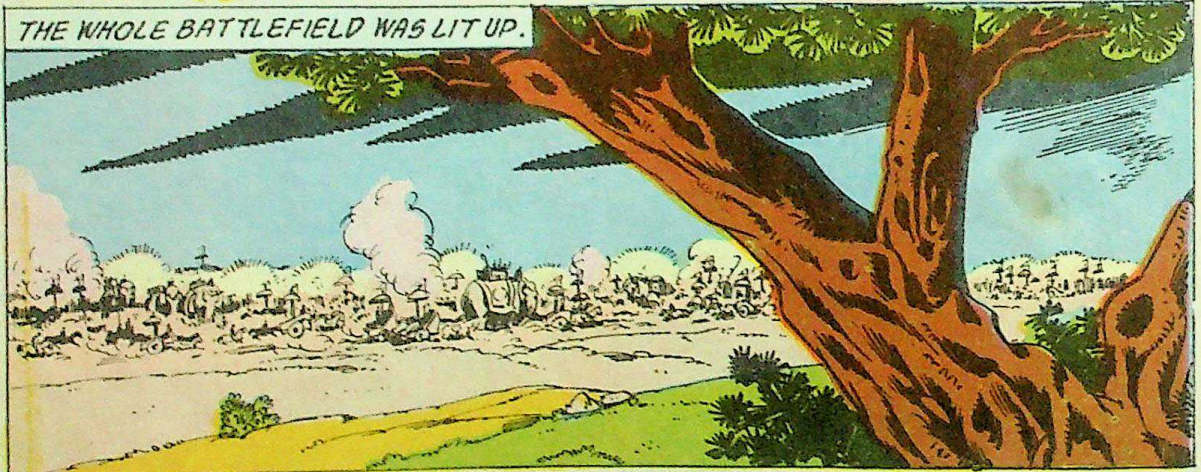
PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPONS!
I COMMAND ALL OF YOU TO CARRY TORCHES.



"THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS DID LIKEWISE AND SOON—"

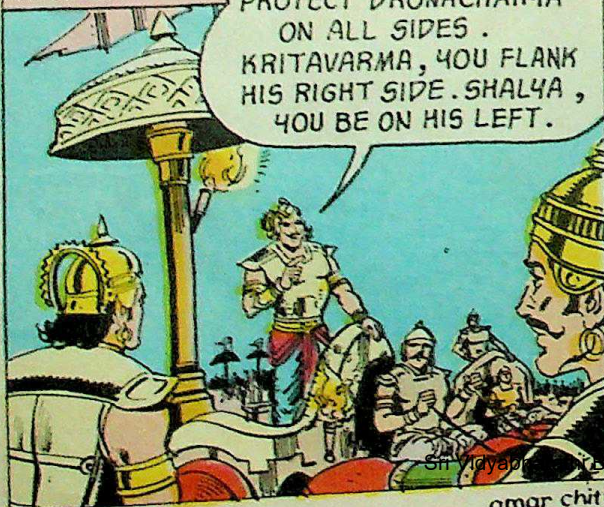


THE WHOLE BATTLEFIELD WAS LIT UP.



"MINDFUL OF DRONA'S INTENT TO FIGHT WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, DURYODHANA EXHORTED HIS KINSMEN—"

PROTECT DRONACHARYA ON ALL SIDES.
KRITAVARMA, YOU FLANK HIS RIGHT SIDE. SHALYA, YOU BE ON HIS LEFT.

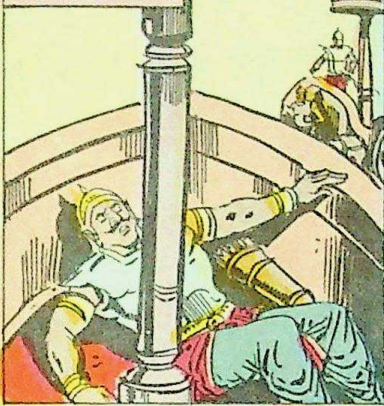


NO ONE BUT DHRISTADYUMNA CAN CONFRONT DRONA. YOUR DUTY IS NOW TO PROTECT DRONACHARYA FROM HIM.

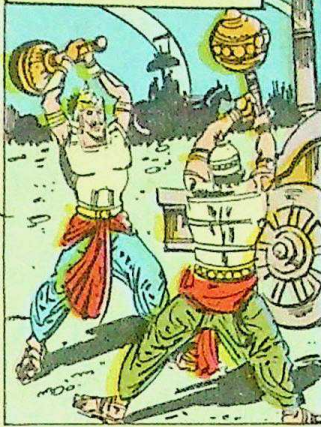


"IN THE BATTLE THAT ENSUED , SEVERAL DUELS WERE FOUGHT .

ASHWATTHAMA ABLY
AVERTED GHATOTKACHA'S
ADVANCES .



BHEEMA DEFEATED
DURYODHANA .



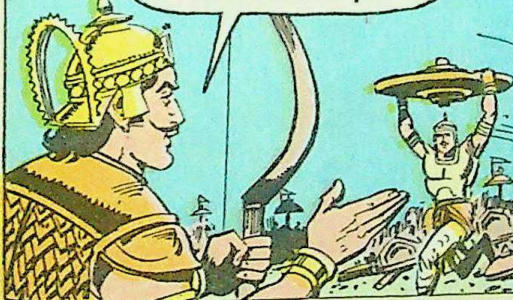
KARNA AND SAHADEVA
MET IN A DUEL .



"SAHADEVA JUMPED DOWN FROM HIS
CHARIOT AND PICKED UP THE WHEEL
OF THE CHARIOT TO FLING AT KARNA .

KARNA SHATTERED THE WHEEL WITH HIS
ARROWS BUT SPARED SAHADEVA'S LIFE .
LIGHTLY TOUCHING HIM WITH THE TIP OF HIS
BOW HE SAID —

DEAR CHILD ! DO NOT TRY
THE IMPOSSIBLE ! WHY
TRY TO FIGHT YOUR
SUPERIORS ?

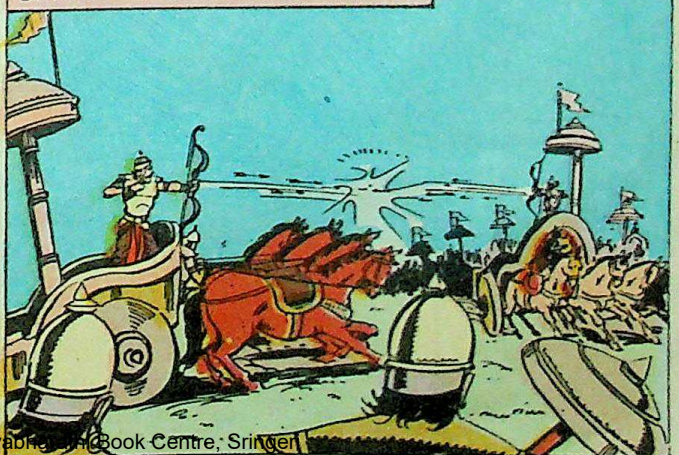
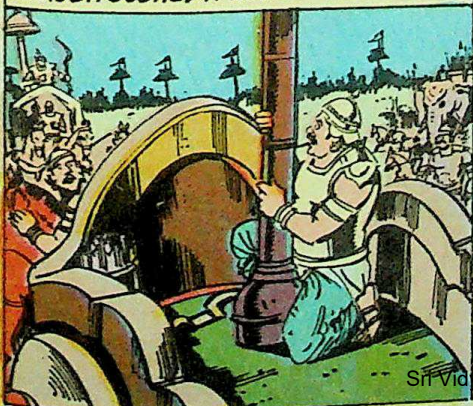


GO AND JOIN
YOUR BROTHER
ARJUNA , OR IF
YOU WISH ,
RETURN TO
YOUR HOME .



"MEANWHILE , VIRATA WAS DEFEATED
BY SHALYA AND SHIKHANDI WAS
VANQUISHED BY KRIPA . HOWEVER ,
NAKULA SCORED A VICTORY OVER SHAKUNI .

"THE BATTLE THAT RAGED BETWEEN KARNA AND
SATYAKI WAS A TERRIBLE ONE .

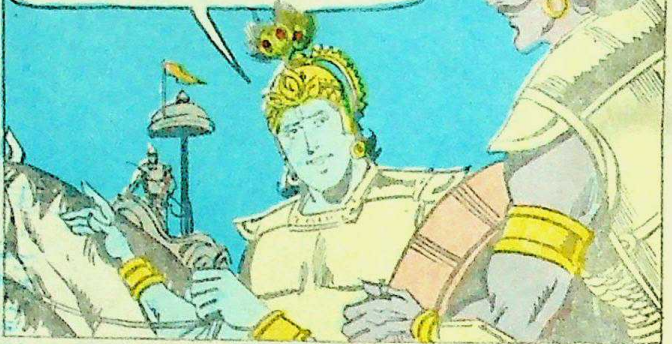


"KARNA'S FURY WAS CREATING HAVOC AMONG THE PANDAVA FORCES. ARJUNA SAID —



"AWARE OF THE MIGHTY SHAKTI IN KARNA'S POSSESSION , KRISHNA DEMURRED —

BESIDES YOU , GHATOTKACHA ALONE IS CAPABLE OF FACING KARNA . LET HIM DO SO , WHILE YOU PROTECT YUDHISHTHIRA .

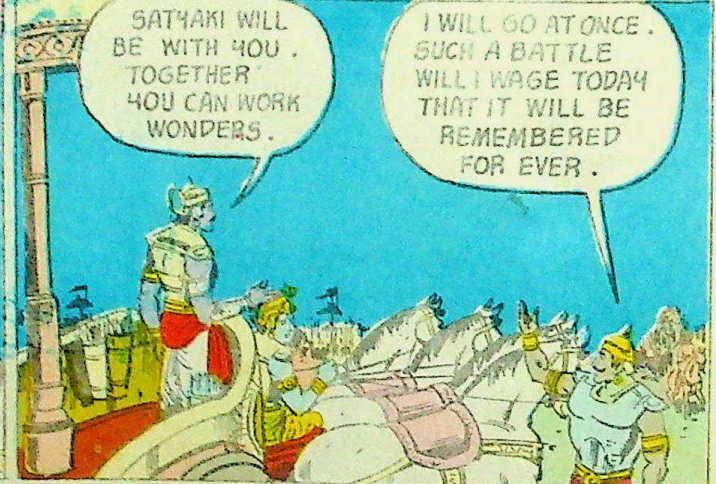


" THEY SUMMONED GHATOTKACHA .

FIGHT KARNA WITH ALL YOUR ASTRAS AND KILL HIM . WE ARE DEPENDING ON YOU .

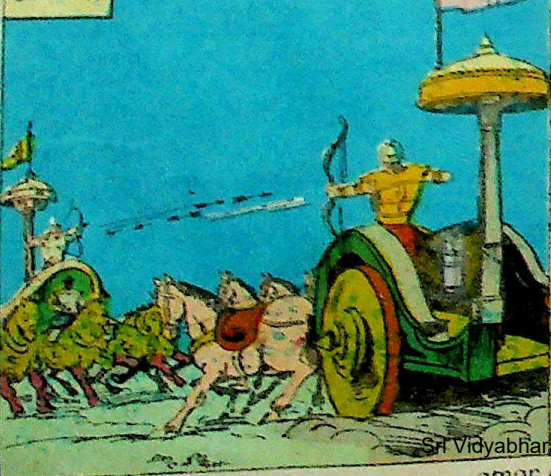


SATHAKI WILL BE WITH YOU . TOGETHER YOU CAN WORK WONDERS .



I WILL GO AT ONCE . SUCH A BATTLE WILL I WAGE TODAY THAT IT WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR EVER .

" IN THE MIDST OF THAT DREADFUL NIGHT , KARNA AND GHATOTKACHA FACED EACH OTHER .



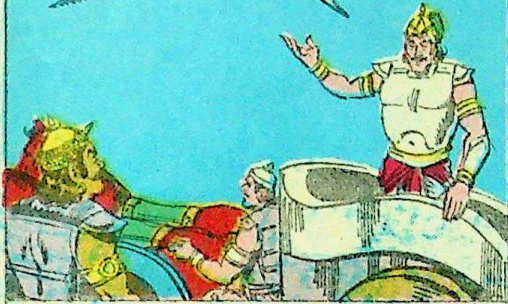
" JUST AS DURYODHANA WAS ABOUT TO SEND DUSHSHASANA TO KARNA'S AID , ALAMBUSHA APPROACHED HIM .

MY FATHER , JATASURA , THE LEADER OF RAKSHASAS , WAS KILLED BY THE PANDAVAS . GIVE ME A CHANCE TO AVENGE HIS DEATH . LET ME FIGHT THE PANDAVAS .



"DURYODHANA WAS GLAD TO OBLIGE."

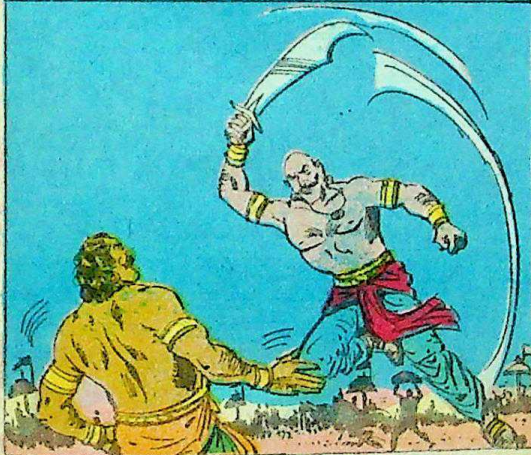
YOU ARE WELCOME. GO AND FIGHT GHATOTKACHA.



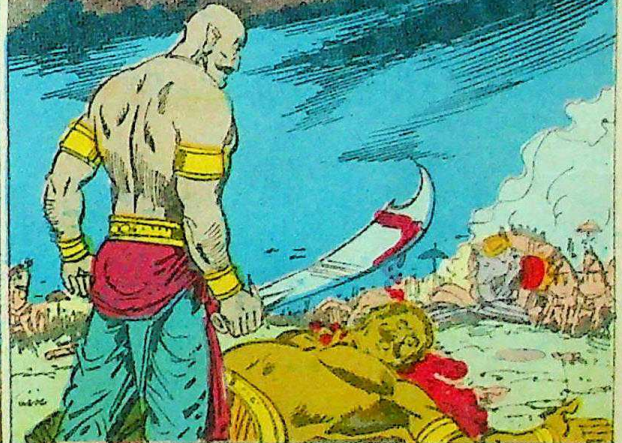
"THE TWO RAKSHASAS FOUGHT WITH VARIOUS WEAPONS AND FINALLY WITH BARE HANDS."



SUDDENLY, GHATOTKACHA JUMPED UP AND SWOOPED DOWN WITH A SWORD.



"WITH A DREADFUL CRY, GHATOTKACHA CUT OFF HIS OPPONENT'S HEAD."

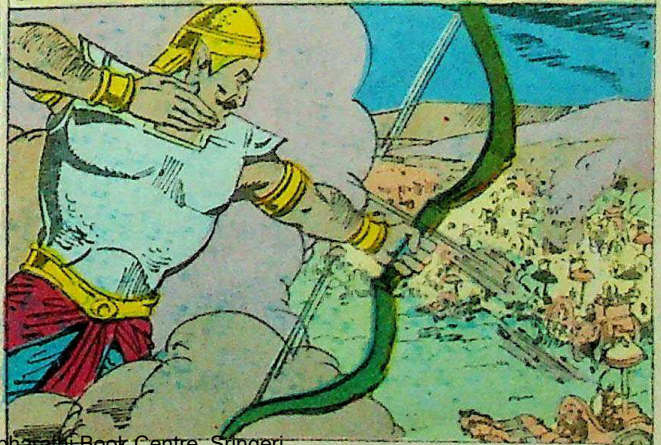


"APPROACHING DURYODHANA, HE THREW ALAMBUSHA'S HEAD TOWARDS HIM."

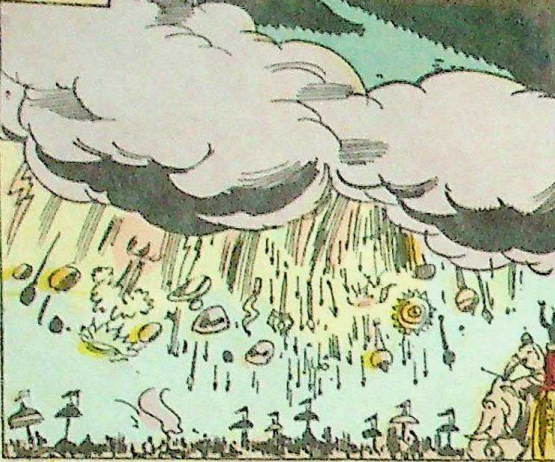
IT IS SAID ONE SHOULD NOT VISIT A KING WITHOUT A GIFT. WAIT AWHILE AND I WILL BRING YOU A HEAD WHICH IS MORE DEAR TO YOU—KARNA'S!



SO FIERCE WAS THE BATTLE BETWEEN KARNA AND GHATOTKACHA THAT IT MADE MIGHTY WARRIORS TREMBLE. GHATOTKACHA WAS IN THE SKY IN A MINUTE...



"... AND ON THE GROUND THE NEXT . HE APPEARED TO BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE . ONLY THE MIGHTY KARNA COULD CONFRONT HIM .



"ALTHOUGH KARNA ABLY CONFRONTED HIM , GHATOTKACHA'S ONSLAUGHT TERRIFIED THE MAURAVAS .

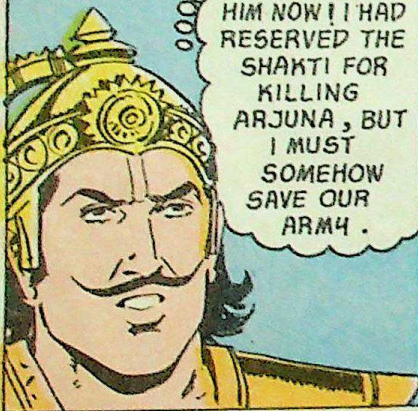
PROTECT US , O KARNA !

USE YOUR SHAKTI !

KILL GHATOTKACHA .

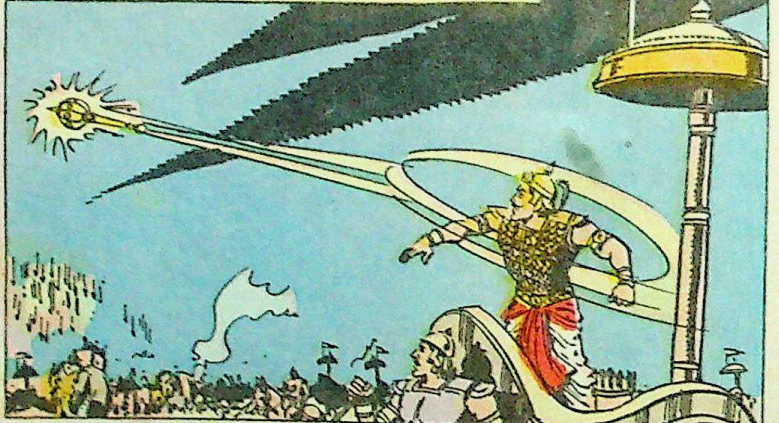


"KARNA WAS NOW IN A DILEMMA .

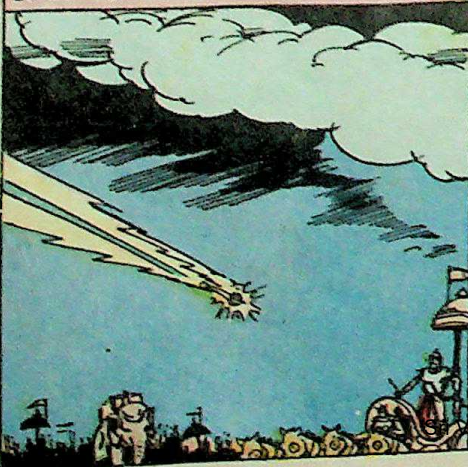


I MUST KILL HIM NOW ! I HAD RESERVED THE SHAKTI FOR KILLING ARJUNA , BUT I MUST SOMEHOW SAVE OUR ARMY .

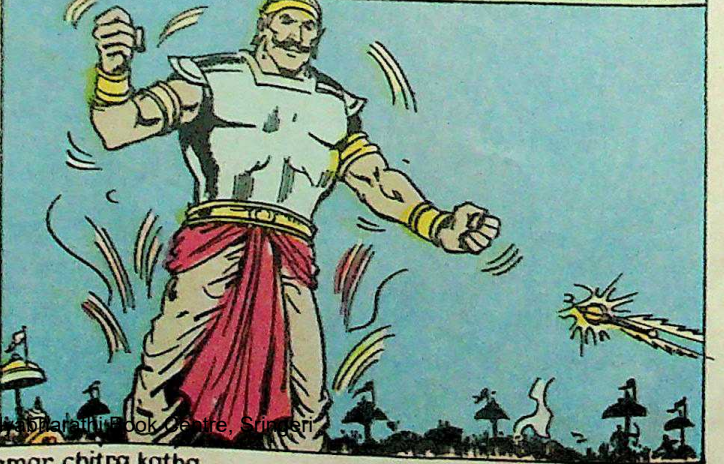
"RELUCTANTLY KARNA TOOK UP THE SHAKTI IN HIS RIGHT HAND AND HURLED IT AT GHATOTKACHA .



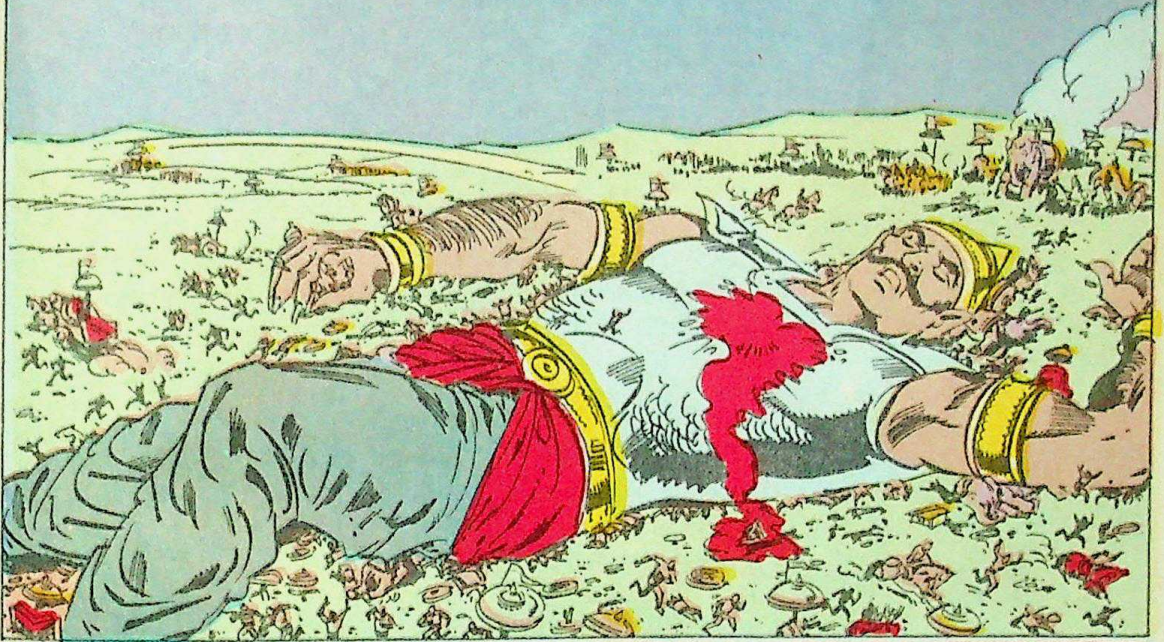
LIKE A SHAFT OF LIGHTNING , IT SPED TOWARDS GHATOTKACHA .



"GHATOTKACHA KNEW HIS END WAS NEAR . AS A LAST DEVICE , HE EXPANDED HIS BODY WITH MAGICAL POWERS ...



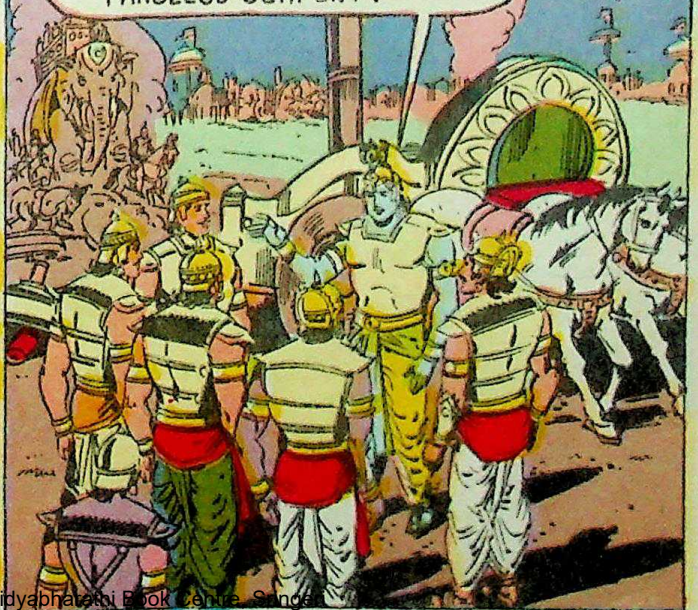
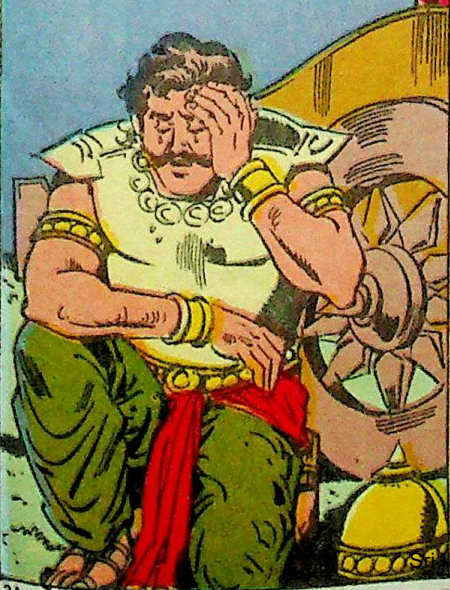
... SO THAT WHEN THE SHAKTI PIERCED AND FELLE HIM, A VAST NUMBER OF MAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE CRUSHED UNDER HIS WEIGHT.

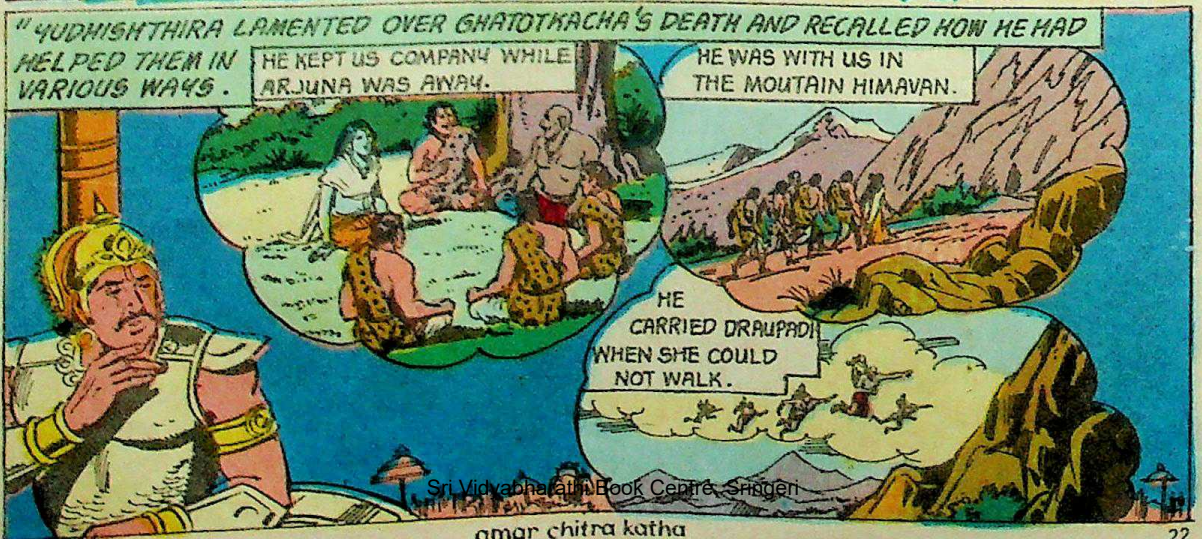
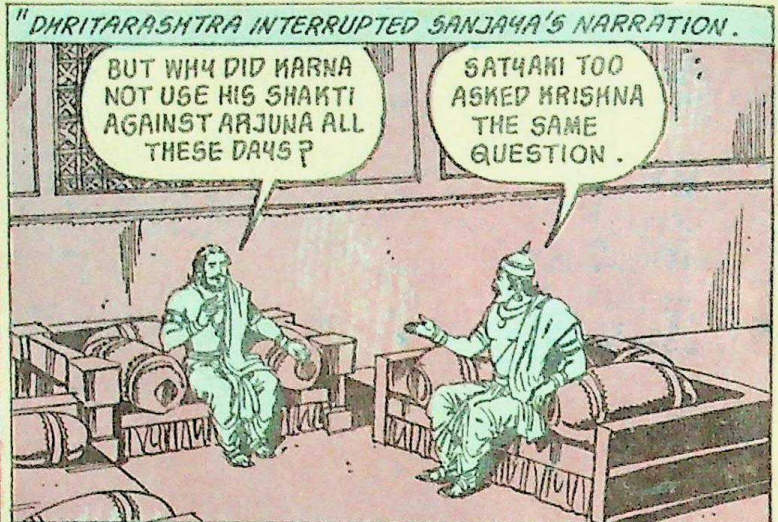
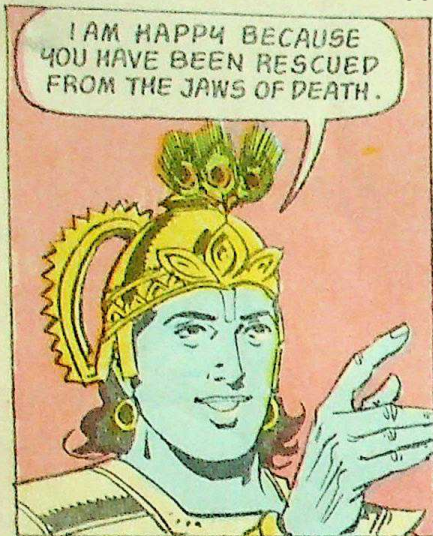


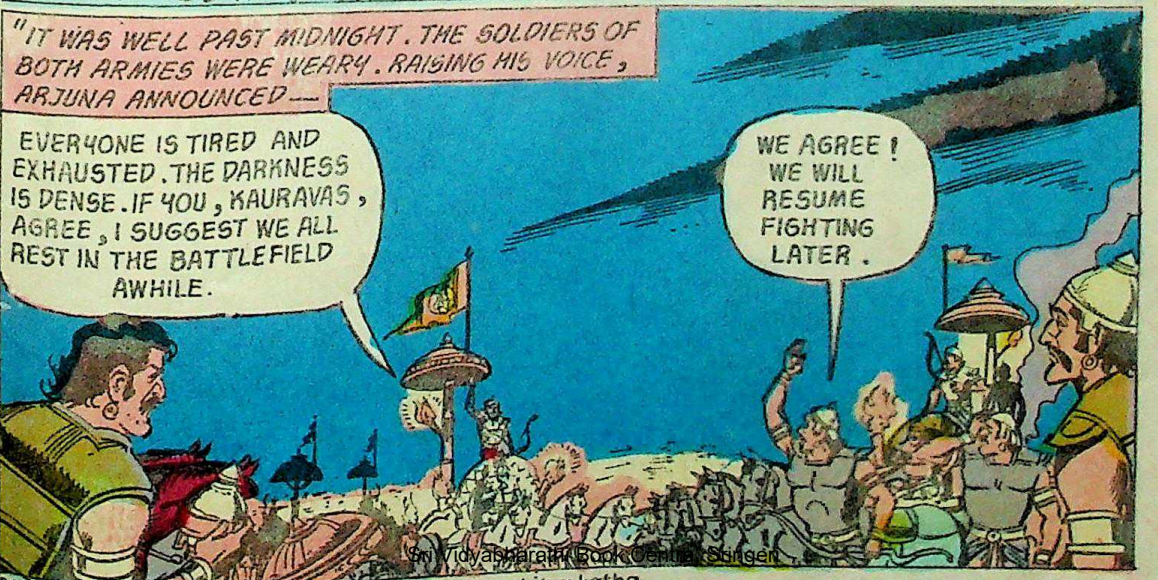
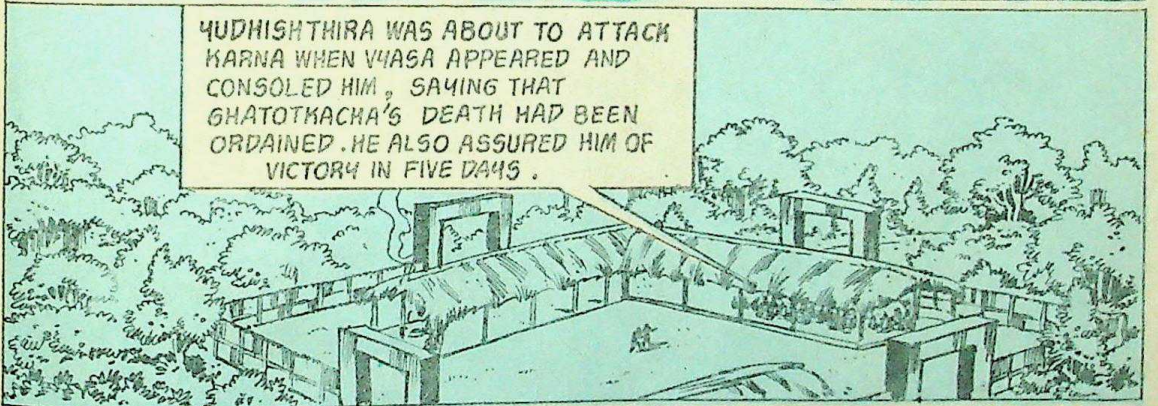
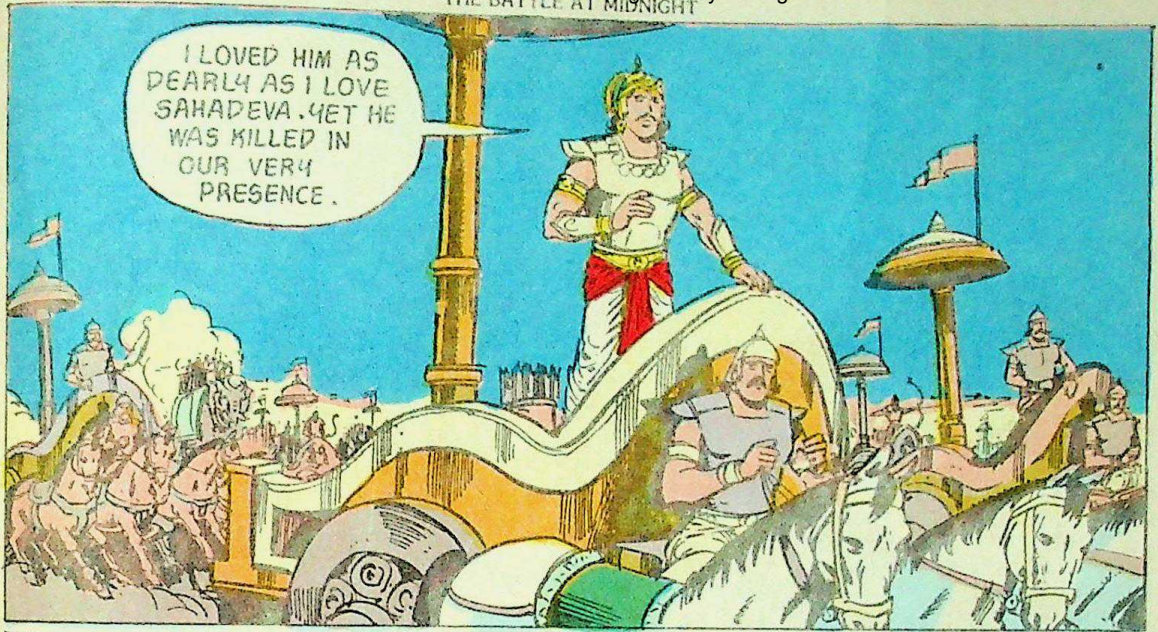
"BHEEMA AND OTHER PANDAVAS WERE SHOCKED AT HIS DEATH."

KRISHNA CONSOLED THEM AND SAID TO ARJUNA .

KARNA HAS USED HIS SHAKTI ONCE AND IT HAS RETURNED TO INDRA. OH! HOW I HAD WORRIED ABOUT HIS USING IT AGAINST YOU. NOW BEREFT OF THE SHAKTI, KARNA IS LIKE A FANGLESS SERPENT.



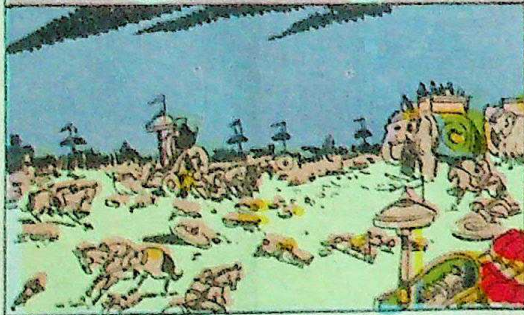




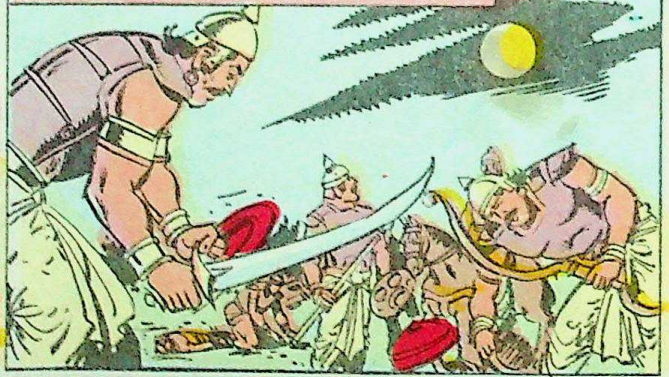
"AS ARJUNA'S SUGGESTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED, THE SOLDIERS GRATEFULLY LAY DOWN TO SLEEP."



"THE BATTLEFIELD WHICH HAD RESOUNDED WITH WAR CRIES WAS NOW ENVELOPED IN SILENCE. THE HUGE ARMIES LAY STILL LIKE A PAINTING DRAWN BY A GIFTED ARTIST..."



"...TILL THE MOON CAME UP. ONE BY ONE THE MEN BEGAN TO STIR. THE BATTLE WAS RESUMED IN THE BRIGHT LIGHT OF THE MOON."



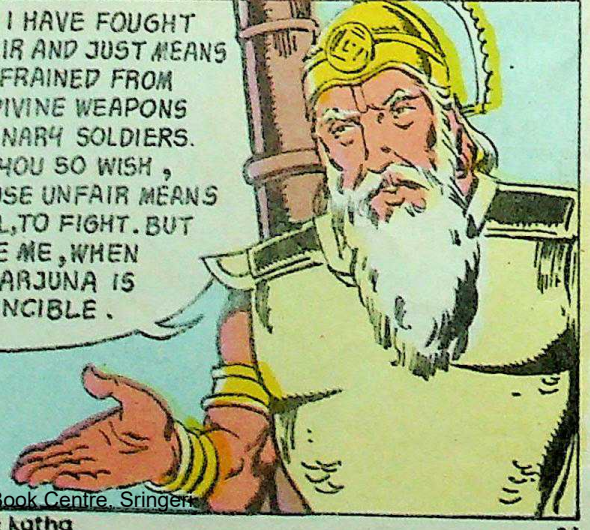
DURYODHANA SAID TO DRONA -

WITH YOUR RENOWNED PROWESS AND CELESTIAL WEAPONS, YOU COULD EASILY DEFEAT THE PANDAVAS. BUT ALAS! YOU CONTINUE TO FAVOUR THEM.



"THE OFT-REPEATED SARCASM AND ACCUSATION WERE BEGINNING TO IRRITATE DRONA."

SO FAR I HAVE FOUGHT WITH FAIR AND JUST MEANS AND REFRAINED FROM USING DIVINE WEAPONS ON ORDINARY SOLDIERS. NOW IF YOU SO WISH, I WILL USE UNFAIR MEANS AS WELL TO FIGHT. BUT BELIEVE ME, WHEN I SAY, ARJUNA IS INVINCIBLE.



"DURYODHANA WAS TOUCHED TO THE QUICK BY THIS PRAISE OF HIS ARCH ENEMY. HE SAID—

WE WILL NOW DIVIDE THE
ARMY INTO TWO. WITH
ONE HALF I WILL ATTACK
YOUR FAVOURITE ARJUNA.

I WISH YOU WELL. YOU
HAVE LIVED A FULL LIFE;
GO AND DO YOUR DUTY
NOW. GO, FIGHT ARJUNA.

"ONE HALF OF THE ARMY WITH DURYODHANA,
DUHSHASANA, SHAKUNI AND KARNA, SET
OUT TO CONFRONT ARJUNA. BUT THEY
WERE ROUTED IN NO TIME.

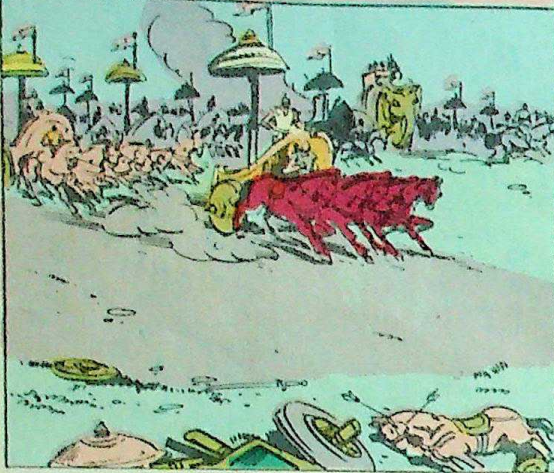
"DRONA LED THE REST OF THE ARMY AND
KILLED THREE GRANDSONS OF DRUPADA.

"WITH TWO SHARP JAVELINS, HE KILLED
VIRATA AND DRUPADA. DHRISTADYUMNA WAS
STUNNED WITH GRIEF.

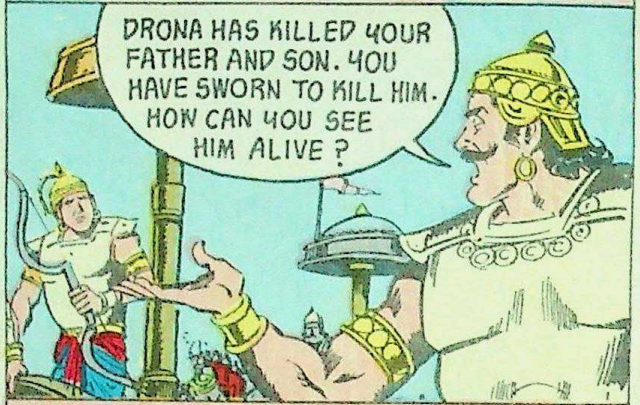
"SWEARING REVENGE, DHRISTADYUMNA
ATTACKED DRONA AND THE
HAURAVAS.

THIS MAN HAS KILLED MY
FATHER AS WELL AS MY SONS.
I WILL NOT LEAVE HIM TODAY.

"DURYODHANA CAME TO HELP DRONA WITH THE REST OF THE ARMY.

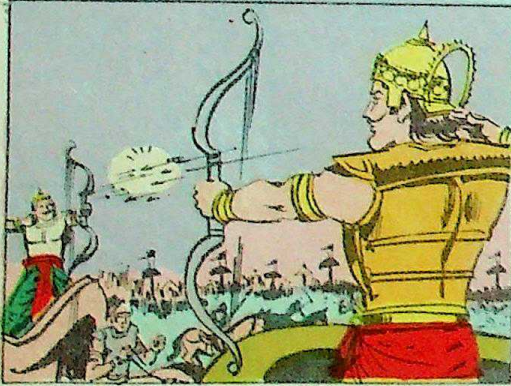


"TRY AS HE MIGHT, DHRISTADYUMNA COULD NOT REACH DRONA. BHEEMA TAUNTED HIM ...

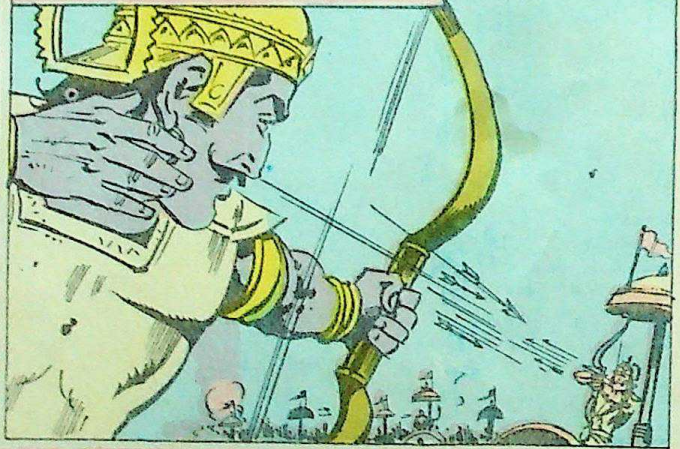


... AND PENETRATING THE KAURAVA ARMY, ENGAGED IN A FIERCE BATTLE WITH KARNA.

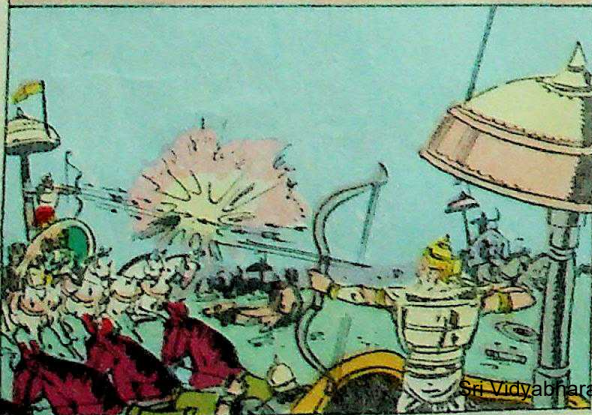
"MEANWHILE THE SUN ROSE IN THE EAST. THE WARRIORS NOW FOUGHT WITH RENEWED VIGOUR. KARNA WAS ENGAGED IN A COMBAT BY BHEEMA.



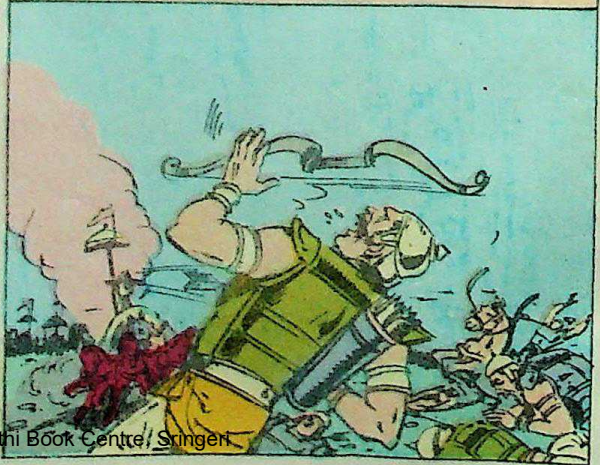
"BUT THE SPECTACULAR SIGHT WAS THE CONFRONTATION. BETWEEN DRONA AND ARJUNA.



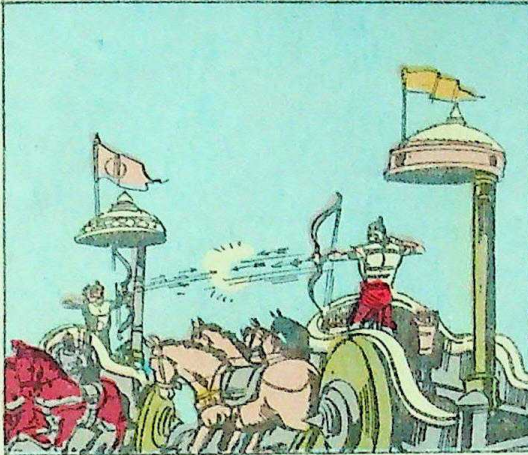
"AFTER A PROLONGED FIGHT WITH EARTHLY AND CELESTIAL WEAPONS, DRONA SENT THE BRAHMASTRA TOWARDS ARJUNA WHO COUNTERED IT WITH THE SAME ASTRA.



NOW DRONA TURNED AWAY FROM ARJUNA AND FOUGHT THE PANCHALA ARMY.



"DURYODHANA AND SATYAKI WERE ENGAGED IN A STRANGE ENCOUNTER."



"WHILE THEY RAINED ARROWS AT EACH OTHER, THEY RECALLED WITH NOSTALGIA THEIR EARLIER DAYS."

WHAT HAPPY TIMES WE HAD TOGETHER, DEAR SATYAKI. NOW BECAUSE OF MY GREED, WE MEET AS ENEMIES.

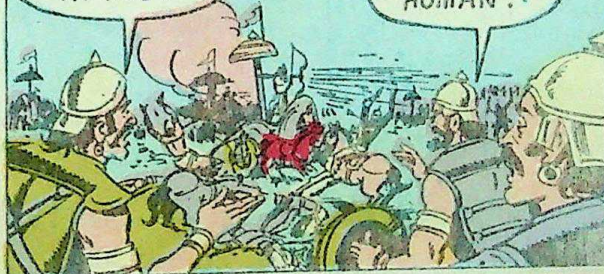
MY DEAR DURYODHANA, THIS IS NEITHER OUR GURU'S HOUSE NOR AN ASSEMBLY. LET US FIGHT LIKE TRUE KSHATRIYAS.



"MEANWHILE DRONA WAS FIGHTING AS IF POSSESSED BY A DEMON. THE PANDAVAS WATCHED AGHAST."

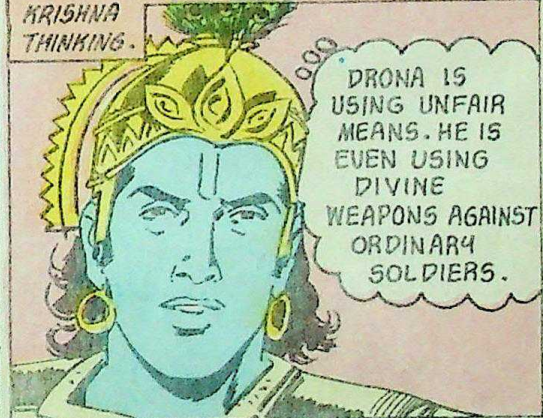
THIS IS NOT LIKE THE ACHARYA AT ALL.

HE DOES NOT LOOK HUMAN.



"THE PANIC AMONG THE SOLDIERS SET KRISHNA THINKING."

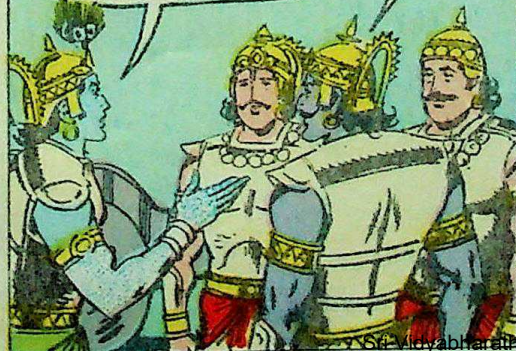
DRONA IS USING UNFAIR MEANS. HE IS EVEN USING DIVINE WEAPONS AGAINST ORDINARY SOLDIERS.



"HE SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA -

IF DRONA KEEPS FIGHTING THUS, YOU WILL HAVE NO ARMY LEFT. WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE HIM LAID DOWN HIS WEAPONS.

YES, BUT HOW?



KRISHNA THOUGHTFULLY SAID -

I AM SURE IF HE HEARS THAT HIS SON ASHWATTHAMA IS NO MORE, HE WILL STOP FIGHTING.

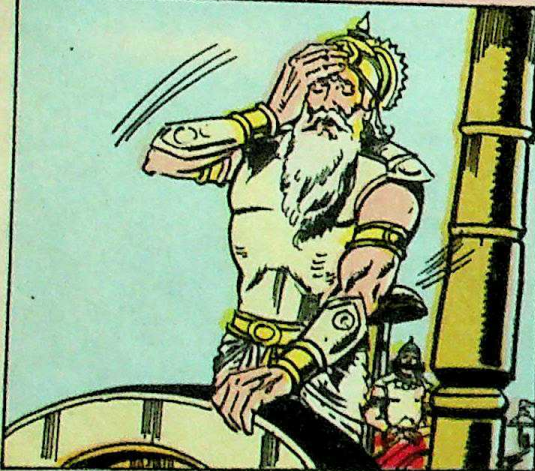


"ARJUNA DID NOT APPROVE OF THIS SUGGESTION. YUDHISHTHIRA AGREED AFTER MUCH PERSUASION. MEANWHILE, BHEEMA KILLED AN ELEPHANT CALLED ASHWATTHAMA. GOING NEAR DRONA HE ANNOUNCED—

ASHWATTHAMA
IS DEAD!



DRONA ALMOST FAINTED WITH SHOCK.

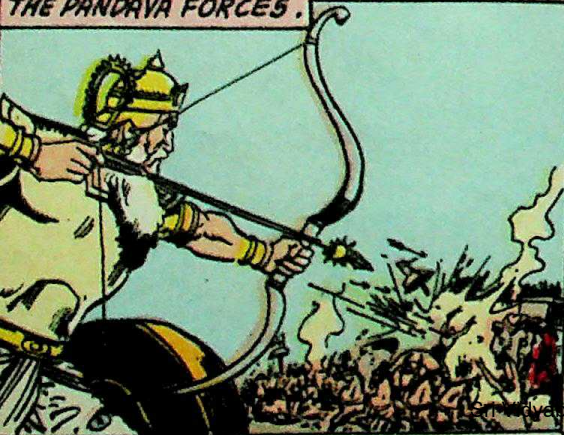


BUT SOON
RECOVERED.



NO, IT CANNOT BE!
NONE CAN KILL MY
ASHWATTHAMA.

"DRONA RESUMED FIGHTING WITH ALL WEAPONS AT HIS DISPOSAL, SLAUGHTERING THE PANDAVA FORCES."

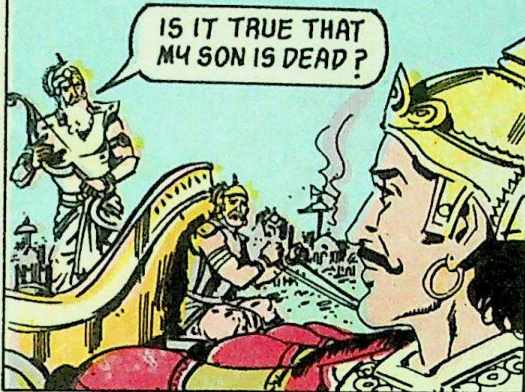


"SEEING HIS UNFAIR AND INHUMAN APPROACH, THE RISHIS FROM HEAVEN, LED BY AGNI, CAME TO MEET DRONA."



THIS UNRIGHTEOUSNESS
DOES NOT BECOME YOU.
LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS AND
PREPARE FOR THE END.

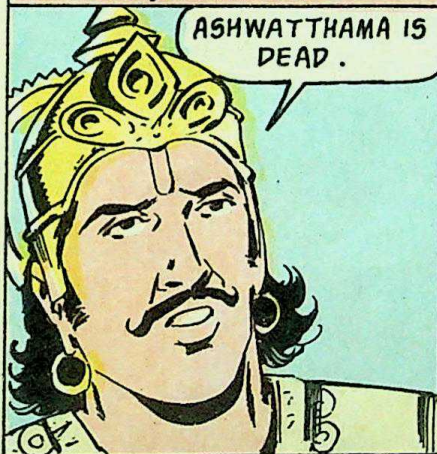
"DEEPLY MOVED BY THEIR COUNSEL AND BHEEMA'S EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENT, DRONA LOOKED AT YUDHISHTHIRA AND SAID —



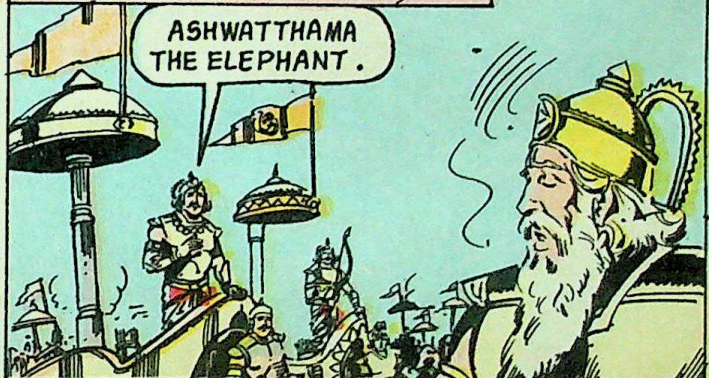
YUDHISHTHIRA HAD NEVER SPOKEN AN UNTRUTH IN HIS LIFE. BUT KRISHNA HAD ANTICIPATED THIS SITUATION AND TOLD HIM.



"SO NOW, HE REPLIED —



ADDING IN AN INAUDIBLE ASIDE —



AS SOON AS THE LIE WAS UTTERED YUDHISHTHIRA'S CHARIOT TOUCHED THE GROUND.*

"HEARING THE NEWS FROM YUDHISHTHIRA, DRONA FAINTED. DHRISTADYUMNA RUSHED TOWARDS HIM.

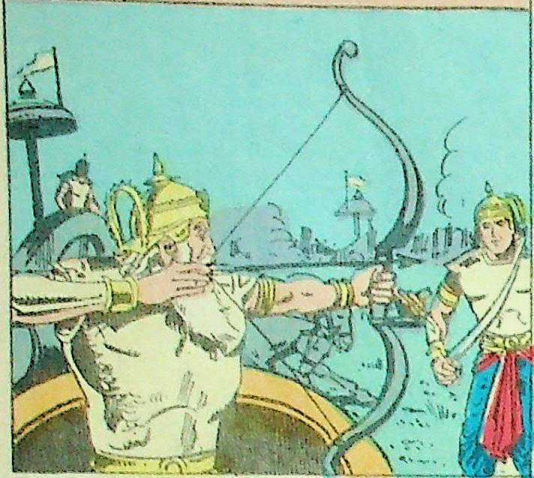


"WHEN DRONA GAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, HE COULD NOT GAIN HIS EARLIER STRENGTH. YET HE KILLED DHRISTADYUMNA'S HORSES.

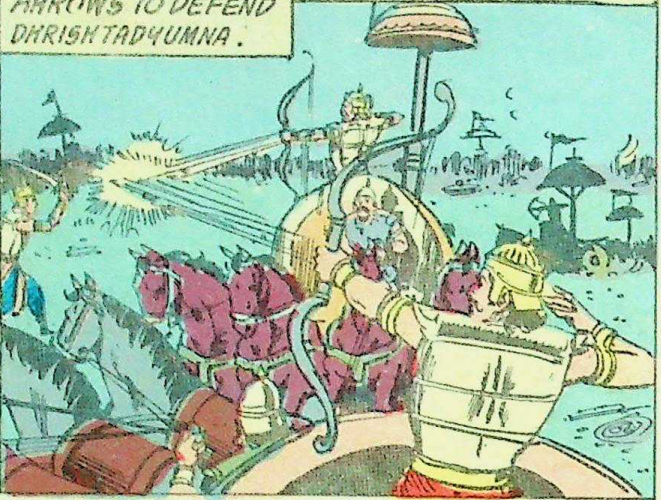


* BECAUSE OF HIS RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT YUDHISHTHIRA'S CHARIOT WAS ALWAYS FOUR FINGER'S BREADTH ABOVE THE GROUND.

"NOW DRONA SHOT SPECIAL SHORT-RANGE ARROWS, AT DHRISTADYUMNA."

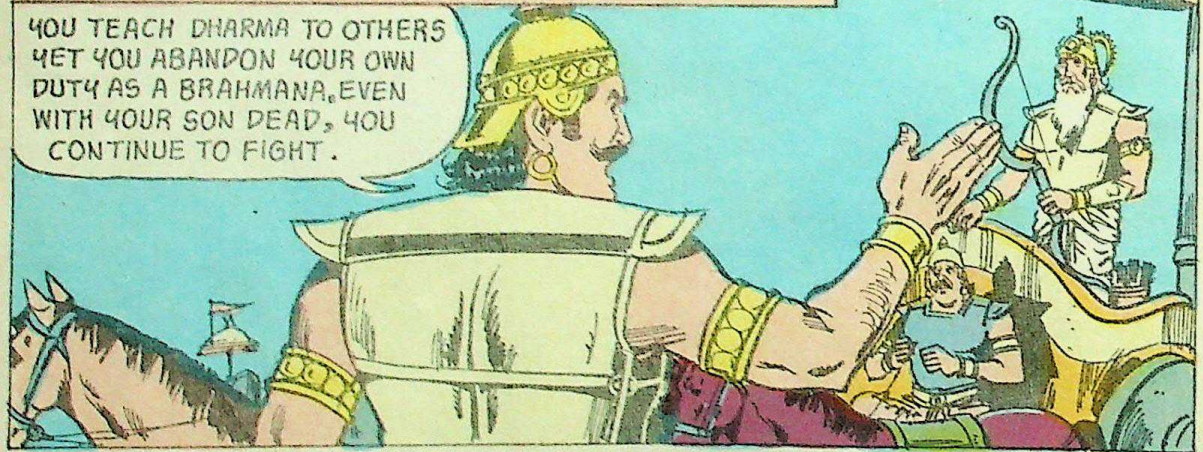


"SATYAKI INTERVENED IN TIME WITH A VOLLEY OF ARROWS TO DEFEND DHRISTADYUMNA."



BHEEMA CONFRONTED DRONA AND SAID SARCASTICALLY -

YOU TEACH DHARMA TO OTHERS
YET YOU ABANDON YOUR OWN
DUTY AS A BRAHMANA, EVEN
WITH YOUR SON DEAD, YOU
CONTINUE TO FIGHT.

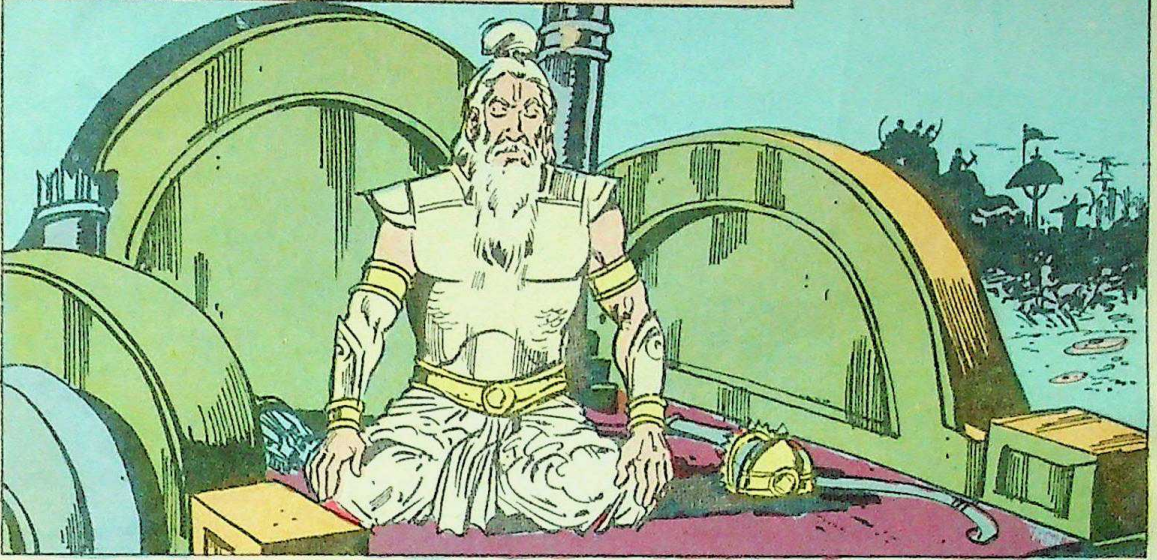


THROWING HIS WEAPONS AWAY, DRONA EXCLAIMED -

O KARNA, O KRIPA,
DURYODHANA! FIGHT
WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT.
I HEREBY LAY DOWN
MY ARMS.

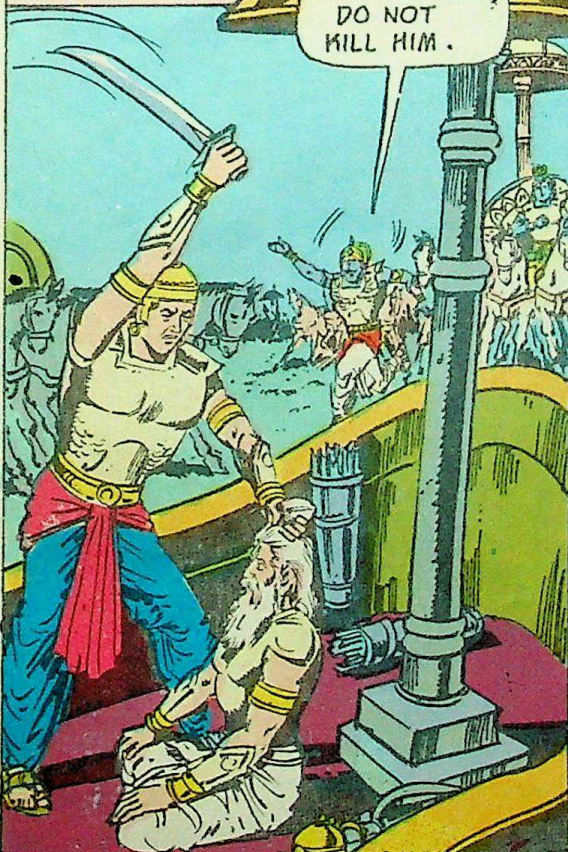


"HE SAT DOWN IN HIS CHARIOT IN A POSE OF MEDITATION."

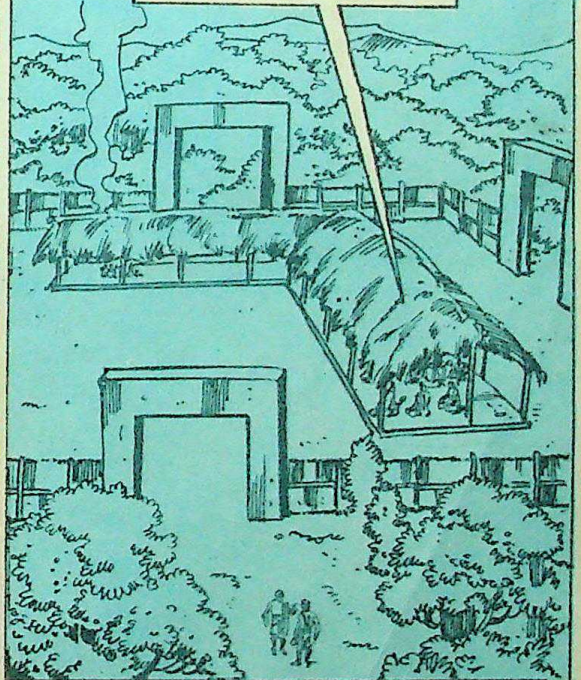


"DHRISHTADYUMNA TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS AND POUNCED ON HIM, SWORD IN HAND."

CAPTURE HIM,
DO NOT
KILL HIM.

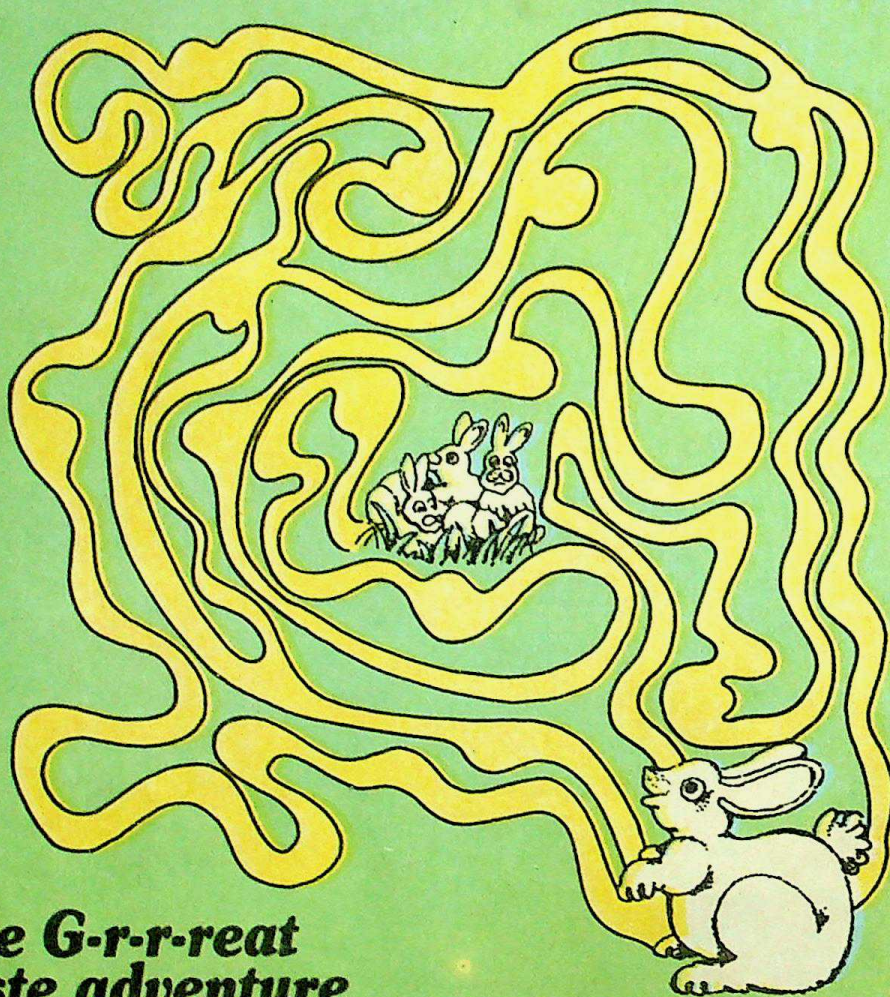


THUS ON THAT FATEFUL
DAY, EVEN AS ARJUNA
PROTESTED
DHRISHTADYUMNA
KILLED DRONA, AS HE
HAD VOWED TO DO.



THUS ENDS THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF
OUR RENDERING OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL
ITIHASA - THE MAHABHARATA.

Help mother rabbit find her bunnies.



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